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The Bible Unlocked

The Bible Unlocked

A Study of the History, Literature and Religious Teachings of the Bible

BY

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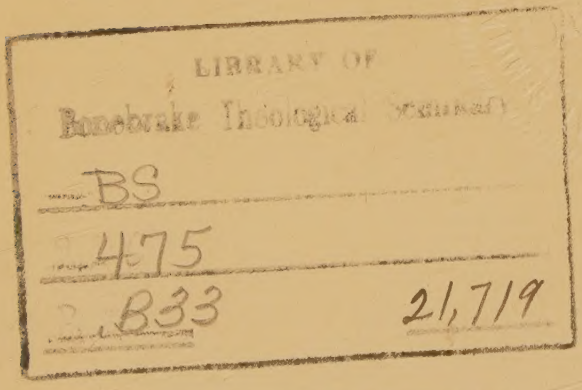
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TO THE MEMORY OF

MY MOTHER

(1857–1899)

PREFACE

The Bible has in no way lost its appeal to the modern age. Wherever understood, interest in it has not abated; nor has the fine reverence for it of past days disappeared. Its usefulness as a thesaurus of golden texts has come, in our time, to be appreciably augmented by the adoption of the new methods of literary and historical study. The present volume has as its background twelve years of experience in the pastorate and the college Bible classroom. The writer has sought, without being technical, or sacrificing inspirational values, to apply to the task he has undertaken the major results of present day scholarship in the three specialized fields of research known as historical criticism, literary interpretation, and biblical theology. More concretely his aim has been (1) to furnish the reader with a constructive historical background for biblical study; (2) to offer encouragement and guidance toward an attempted analysis and appreciation of the greatest of its writings; (3) to awaken a desire and lay a foundation for a further acquaintance with the origin and development, the spiritual character, and the permanent value of the religious teachings which have made the Bible the world's best known and most loved book.

The scope of the volume may be inferred from the following outline of its principal divisions or parts:

I. The Bible: Its Background, Origin, and Content
II. The Building of the Hebrew Nation
III. The Age of Prophecy
IV. The Establishment of Judaism
V. The Life of Christ
VI. The Apostolic Age

No one undertaking a work such as this is able fully to acknowledge the debt he owes to the world of scholars both past

and present. The author must, therefore, content himself with a word of heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all who have preceded him with their contributions to the sacred task. He wishes, however, here especially to thank Professor Merritt M. Harris and Mr. Carleton B. Spotts, who willingly read and offered their criticism of the manuscript; also Mr. Charles Leitzell, who was kind enough to prepare the maps.

It may be added that the writer has kept primarily in mind the needs of the college classroom, the Sunday School, the religious institute, and the week-day school of religion, without, it is hoped, sacrificing the usefulness of the book for private study and the home. If, under divine guidance, the reader of these pages may be helped to a more thorough understanding and a deeper affection for the Word of God, the prayerful hope with which this volume is committed to the public will have been fulfilled.

HENRY MARTIN BATTENHOUSE.

January 1, 1928.

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PART I

THE BIBLE: ITS BACKGROUND, ORIGIN, AND CONTENT

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

I. THE BIBLE AND LIFE

RELIGION, more than any other human institution, is the mother of civilization. The concept of God is the noblest work of man's mind. It is woven into the very texture of man's daily thought. It runs like a golden thread through every notable chapter in history; it binds races and nations into social unity; it instils reverence for law, and fosters ideals of morality and art; it kindles the fires of creative imagination, and keeps alive the flaming torch of faith.

Taken at its best, religion is love, and love at its best is the conqueror and master of death. Religion, therefore, is universal and ineradicable. There are no peoples or tribes devoid of the sense of awe which is its most elemental form of expression. The impulse to religion is not mere surrender, but self-realization. Through it man rises to sublimity, to divine sonship, to moral grandeur, to a supra-mundane perspective, and to the joy of a perfect peace.

To most of us the Bible is the supreme book of religion. In Europe and America, particularly, we have come to look upon it as our civilization's most valuable literary and spiritual heritage. No other book has been read in as many languages and by as many peoples, and none compares with it in influence and power over the masses of humanity. Its return to popularity among scholars and in the educational institutions of our time is fully deserved. It is the most wholesome sign of the age—the proof that, despite the inroads of a vicious materialism, men's spiritual sensibilities have not been wholly dulled and the way to human progress is still clearly open.

II. THE HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE BIBLE

The Bible may be read as a master story-book, or as a dictionary of great texts; it may be studied either topically or doctrinally; or viewed as great literature; or regarded from the point of view of general history; or pondered and revered as sacred and divine scripture. Each of these methods of approach is of value. Taken together, they give the Bible the distinction of being the one book with a message for all times and to all men. However, in order that Bible study may, through its comprehensiveness, be intellectually fruitful, it must proceed historically. It must have its basis, first of all, in actual facts. These facts must somehow be visualized and perceived while they undergo the familiar process of spiritual reënactment which historical study alone affords. When thus historically recreated, the Bible becomes a marvelous book. It stands as unimpeachable testimony of a momentous miracle, the miracle of the providential manifestation of God in an epoch of human history.

There is, moreover, a genuine disciplinary value to be attached to this type of historical study. It is in the truest sense scientific; it inculcates patience; it creates moods of expectancy, and awakens the oft-waning spirit of religious adventure; it trains for scholarship by imparting breadth and depth of vision. The historical attitude toward the sacred scriptures is not incompatible with that of the true worshiper. Religious meditation, which is at the background of every devotional exercise, is a distinctly, though not an exclusively, deliberate process. Moreover, man's thought, true to its functional character, follows, in its natural unfolding, the developmental order, which is itself the order of history and indeed of life itself. It is easy to see, therefore, that the student who, in making his acquaintance with the Bible, adopts, as much as he may be able, the historian's attitude puts himself into a position in which he may learn by degrees to discern the unfolding and increasing purposes of God as revealed in His Word.

Finally, this intimate historical approach to the Bible invests

it with living reality. Its characters step out of antiquity and take their places by our side. Its great truths mirror our lives, making us momentarily conscious of our own abasement, but perennially inspiring in us ideals toward higher living. Its divinity, in the person of Jesus Christ, opens vistas to the human soul in which it sees something of the nature and character of God. We see in the Bible, as in a drama, the sublime interplay of human passions and divine aspirations. Slowly it may be, but inevitably, the consciousness dawns upon us that God is benignantly and all-pervasively present in His world, that faith and human ideals are after all justified, that love is of a truth stronger than death, and that, sanely interpreted, life has a true meaning and an eternal goal.

III. THE LITERARY GROWTH OF THE BIBLE

The Bible did not come into being without human effort. It is the product of the creative intelligence of its religiously inspired writers. It is a library of masterpieces of sacred literature, each of which, when studied searchingly, is subject to questions of authorship, date, and circumstances of composition. Each, too, reflects in a peculiar way the individual temperament of its author, revealing certain unmistakable characteristics of style and conveying its own individual message. In a word, the Bible has a literary history the various periods of which are in close correspondence with those of the national and religious life of the Hebrew people.

The age of literary productivity covers approximately thirteen centuries, from 1200 B. C. to 100 A. D. More specifically it falls into four general periods. The first of these may be called a period of literary fragments. It begins with the earliest years of Hebrew history and continues to the time of David.[1] These literary fragments, now embedded in the historical narratives of the books of the Bible from Genesis to Second Samuel, are easily identified as of great antiquity by their archaic forms of grammar and syntax, their primitivity of world outlook, and

[1] From about 1200 to 1000 B. C.

their utter spontaneity of natural passion and genuinely lyrical character. The Biblical references to the "Book of the Wars of Jehovah" and the "Book of Jashar" carry the inference that these primitive documents were collections of songs, ballads, elegies, proverbs, and popular stories, which were at first orally transmitted, and later compiled and treasured as the literary remnants of a noble and historic past.[1] Their artlessness of style, their youthful vigor, their marked sincerity, and the frankly human qualities of their sentiment give them a large intrinsic as well as historical significance. The following are the ten best-known of these literary gems of Bible times.

1. Isaac's Blessing of Jacob: Gen. XXVII: 27–29.
2. Jacob's Prophecy: Gen. XLIX: 2–27.
3. The Song at the Red Sea: Exod. XV: 1–18.
4. The Blessing of Moses: Deut. XXXIII: 2–29.
5. The Song of Deborah: Judges V.
6. Jotham's Fable: Judges IX: 8–15.
7. Samson's Riddle: Judges XIV: 14 and 15.
8. Hannah's Prayer: I Sam. II: 1–10.
9. David's Lamentation: II Sam. I: 19–27.
10. The Last Words of David: II Sam. XXIII: 1–7.

The second period in the literary history of the Bible begins with the days of David and Solomon and culminates with the Exile.[2] It may be called the period of Israel's literary development. Politically it was the age of the Hebrew nation, marked at first by golden prosperity, then by rapid decline, and finally by complete dissolution. Four literary types owe their actual origin and advance to this time. The first was the song of popular appeal and deep religious sentiment, associated from the beginning with the character and spiritual genius of David, and brought to culmination, in the course of the centuries, in the marvelous collection of devotional literature familiarly known

[1] The references to these two books of antiquity are found in Numbers XXI: 14–15, Joshua X: 12–13, and II Samuel I: 17–27.

[2] David was king c. 1000 B. C. Judah went into exile in 586 B. C. The period, therefore, covers approximately four hundred years.

as the book of the Psalms. The second developed into the proverb or wisdom literature, which found its first great patron in Solomon, and which, in the far subsequent days of the scribes and sages, became the basis, among the Jewish people, of a widespread and popular interest in religious education. The third type to be developed was the historical literature of the Old Testament. Its origin is directly traceable to the Hebrew prophets. These men of special religious genius taught the doctrine of the divine guidance and the spiritual mission of the Hebrew nation. They sought to interpret Israel's past history in the light of this doctrine. The result was a series of histories which, in later years under editorial supervision, came to constitute one composite historical library. Finally there was the literature which gathered around the great prophetic movement during the closing years of Israel's and Judah's national history, and which, considered in its totality, represents the noblest expression of the religious life of Old Testament times.

The third stage in the literary growth of the Bible opened with the Exile and closed with the dawn of the Christian era.[1] In Biblical history this is called the period of the origin and development of Judaism. It was characterized by a social and spiritual transformation which resulted in the rise of the Jewish religion of the law. The people became first the makers, and then the worshipers of a book. The disappearance of the nation turned the minds of men in upon themselves. Religion became more introspective, personal, and purely spiritual. This meditative mood was well-suited to the creation of a new and noble religious literature. The prophet, who had previously been chiefly a statesman and moral reformer, now became a philosopher and poet. As a divine oracle the tongue was now superseded by the pen. The words once spoken by Moses were written interpretatively and more elaborately by Ezra. The versions, which had developed somewhat independently during the long intervening years, received the scribe's editorial attention. They were codified and given the desired historical setting.

[1] The dates of this period accordingly are from 586 to 4 B. C.

Additional histories were written, both to preserve the events with which they dealt, and to reinterpret them in the light of the gradually changing popular religious consciousness. Prophet, scribe, historian, and sage, all wrought together to preserve Israel's illustrious past, and to make it the background for an equally illustrious Messianic future. Thus the Pentateuch came into being, followed by a collection of the books of the prophets and of the so-called Sacred Writings. The final result was the formation of the Old Testament canon, or sacred collection of ancient Hebrew literature. Three Biblical classics, the product of this period, most nearly typify its literary genius, its philosophical tendencies and its profound spirit of piety. They are the books of Psalms, Proverbs, and Job.

The fourth and final stage in the literary growth of the Bible is that of the New Testament. The period falls, generally speaking, within the first Christian century. It had its actual beginning in the public utterances of Jesus, the superlative beauty and power of which are amply suggested in the report that "never man spake like this man." [1] Then followed a short period of the oral transmission of the Gospel story. A little later written fragments appeared, some of them preserving the words, others the events, especially the miracles, in the life of Jesus. These literary fragments, together with numerous oral traditions, became the sources of the present New Testament Gospels. The Gospel of Mark was the first to be written; it was followed at rather close intervals by the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The last of the group was the Gospel of John. As our later study will reveal, these records of the life and teachings of Jesus were the product of the quarter century between 65 and 90 A. D.

There is a group of New Testament writings, however, which antedates the period of the written Gospels. This is the collection of letters and epistles from the hand of Paul. These writings, which were a direct outgrowth of the missionary life of the apostle, made their appearance at intervals from 50 to 65

[1] John VII: 46.

A. D. They are, therefore, among the earliest authentic sources of Gospel history. The remaining epistles of the New Testament are, for the most part, the product of the closing decades of the first century.

CHAPTER II

THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE Biblical books may be studied in their chronological order, or according to a classification by types. With a fair regard for the general time order of their composition, the writings of the Old Testament may be divided into four distinct groups: (1) the Historical Books; (2) the Books of Prophecy; (3) the Books of Song and Devotion; and (4) the Books of Wisdom and Religious Philosophy.

I. HISTORY

These historical books furnish the background and provide us with the perspective for our study. They may conveniently be allowed to fall into three sections according to their varying characteristics.

To the first section belong the first six books of the Bible which, because of the common elements in their literary structure, have come to be known as the Hexateuch. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Joshua, especially, reveal a considerable number of striking resemblances; while Deuteronomy stands peculiarly apart and in a class by itself. Biblical scholarship, accordingly, as the final result of more than a half century of critical investigation, has arrived at a new interpretation of these Old Testament books. An awakened interest in the historical study of the Bible has led to the conclusion that the "Law was not the starting-point, but the culmination of Israel's development." [1] It is believed that the books embodying the traditional Mosaic legislation are, in their present literary form, the work

[1] H. P. Smith, Old Testament History, pg. 21.

of a late post-Exilic author and editor,—very presumably of Ezra, the noted reformer and scribe, under whom, as we have already learned, the religion of Israel became a worship of the Law. This view has for its basis the discovery of two important facts. The first is that these books are not pure history, but an intermixture of historical narrative with legislative tradition; the second is that we have presented in them not a single continuous history, but an actual series of histories, originally separated by intervening centuries, but now forming a composite whole.

The narratives which make up the Hexateuch are, for the most part, consecutively arranged. Occasionally, however, there are sections which form an almost complete historical parallel. The stories of the Creation, the Flood, and the Crossing of the Red Sea furnish the reader with interesting examples.[1] Careful investigation points to four originally independent historical narratives embedded in the present structure of the Hexateuch. The authors of these primitive narratives are, of course, unknown. For reasons inherent in the literary character of their work, they have come to be identified among scholars by the use of four linguistic symbols. The earliest of these historians, by reason of his consistent use of the name Jehovah, is called J. It is estimated that he lived and wrote at a time close to 850 B. C. His successor who seems to have preferred the name Elohim, designating God, is himself known by the letter E. The time at which he wrote was, in all probability, that of Amos, the prophet, i. e., about 750 B. C. Next in historical order came the Deuteronomistic historian, commonly designated by the letter D. He was, like J and E, a prophet in spirit and calling. The book of Deuteronomy, which contains an expression of his religious views, appears to have been written sometime shortly before 621 B. C. Finally there was the priestly historian, P, whose emphasis upon religious ritual and Jewish legislation marks him as a writer of post-Exilic times.

[1] Let the student compare, e. g., Gen. I:1–II: 4a with Gen. II: 4b–III: 24. In Gen. VI: 5–IX: 29 the originally separate portions of the two flood narratives are closely interwoven. Exod. XIII: 17–XV: 21 presents a literary combination of three narrative sources in the story of the Crossing of the Red Sea.

An attempt at finding a date for his work leads us to approximately 450 B. C.[1]

In their present historical mold the first six books of the Bible represent a series of consecutive origins or beginnings. They tell the story, first, of the origin of the world and of man, then of human history, and of the various languages and races of men. After that they follow with an account of Hebrew origins: the call to a new home, the dawn of divine revelation and of a new form of worship, the birth of the nation, the establishment of the Law, and the conquest and colonization of a new land. The name Genesis is, in epitome, an appropriate title for this whole class of writings.

The books of Judges, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, and Ruth constitute the second group of Old Testament writings. Like those of the Hexateuch, they are of composite literary structure and authorship. Judges is an excellent example of this type of Biblical composition. Its editorial aim and method are easily apparent. In essence it is a group of stories gathered about certain heroes or judges of the Hebrew people. These stories, which form the entire nucleus of the history, are set in a customary doctrinal framework the purpose of which is to teach a religious truth and to convey a definite moral impression. The author of Judges is accordingly not so much a historian as a true philosopher of history. To him history has a meaning; it is providential; it educates and admonishes; it reveals the laws of life and the will of God. The profound truth which underlies the entire book is that the safety and life of the Hebrew nation depend upon an unhesitating and unintermittent loyalty to God.[2]

[1] For a further study of the composite authorship of the Hexateuch see Wade's O. T. Hist., pp. 3 ff. and Driver's Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, pp. 91 ff.

[2] Chapter II: 11–19 presents the underlying thought and aim of the book. The literary and religious formula according to which each story is written is as follows: a period of rest and prosperity is followed by rebellion against God; rebellion brings trouble and calamity; suffering turns men to God, Who hears their cry and brings deliverance. The reader of Judges, in meditating upon its author's conclusion, is led irresistibly to confront the question: Is this not in reality the complete cycle of man's personal and historical experience?

The Samuel-Kings narrative contains several instances of duplicate history. The most outstanding is that which deals with the prophet Samuel's attitude toward the Hebrew kingship.[1] Another is the two-fold account of the slaying of Goliath.[2] Of additional interest to the reader is the author's skilful intermingling of the chronological lists of kings with the fascinating and popular stories that had previously gathered about such characters as the prophets Elijah and Elisha. Most of all to be admired is the lofty ethical note which is sounded throughout the entire narrative, and the spiritual perception with which, in the concluding chapters, the writer analyzes the character and views the destiny of the Hebrew nation. It is a kingly history and worthy of the prophetic hand which shaped it and gave it life. The thought in it centers entirely upon Israel's national life. It is the record of a bold adventure toward the building of a nation; an intimate account of the strength and weakness of dominant personal figures; an anthology of the treasured thought of kings, statesmen, and prophets.

The book of Ruth, though it has its historical setting in the period of the Judges, belongs both to another age and to another class. Its association with a period familiarly known as the roughest and most war-like in Old Testament history is itself a tribute to the Hebrew people of that time. Its picture of private and domestic life is no doubt accurately drawn. If so, it stands as an amazing example of the power of the spiritual life to overcome difficulties of daily circumstance and physical environment.

The histories of the third and last group are the two Books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. The first four of these were originally one book. They are, in their present form, the work of one author, and belong to the middle post-Exilic period. A fairly approximate date for them is 300 B. C. This

[1] See I Sam. IX–XI. Here are clearly two divergent views of the person and mission of Samuel. According to one, the earlier account, he is a prophet and a seer; according to the other he is a ruler and a judge. As a prophet he is in search of a king for Israel; as a judge he regards the kingship as an offence against his own office and against God.

[2] Compare I Sam. XVII with II Sam. XXI: 19.

history begins, as does the Genesis-Kings history with the origin of man; Chronicles parallels very closely the account of Second Samuel and Kings; the Ezra-Nehemiah narrative deals with events of developing interest after the Exile. Except for the personal memoirs of Nehemiah, which constitute a document of exceptional interest and literary value, the Chronicler's history is not fascinating reading; genealogical lists take the place of the popular stories of earlier historians; ecclesiastical ideas displace facts of general human interest; the virtues of Judah are strongly contrasted with the evils of Israel; the prophet gives way to the priest, the historian to the annalist; religion becomes legalistic, and literature the work of the scribe. Nevertheless, what is essential to the chronicler's task remains: his spiritual conception of God; his high moral sense; his clear consciousness of Israel's divine mission; and his comparatively free and fearless treatment of the characters and materials of history. The book of Esther, appended to the Chronicler's history to which it chronologically belongs, reflects clearly the spirit of its time. It is an absorbingly interesting story of heroism and devotion under religious persecution.[1]

II. PROPHECY

The prophetic books of the Old Testament are most conveniently divided according to their representative historical periods, and therefore into four groups.

The first of them were written during what is known as the Assyrian period. They are the work of four noted prophets: Amos and Hosea, of the northern kingdom of Israel; and Isaiah and Micah, of the southern kingdom of Judah. These first books of written prophecy reflect the political and religious conditions of the divided Hebrew kingdom during the early years of its tragic decline. More definitely, however, they repre-

[1] Mention ought to be made here of the late O. T. history of First and Second Maccabees found in the collection of the Apocrypha. This history deals with the Jewish struggle for independence during the second century before Christ. It was written not long after that time.

sent a new and revolutionary spiritual movement in Hebrew History. As we shall learn later, the prophets were Israel's saviours in her times of crises. Without them there could have been no New Testament Gospel. They were the natural and historical forerunners of Jesus. Each of the eighth century prophets proclaimed his own individual message: Amos became an interpreter of religion in terms of the moral life; Hosea preached repentance and the compassion of Jehovah; Isaiah challenged his people to a supreme confidence in God; Micah arose as a defender of justice in behalf of the poor.

The seventh century, B. C., is called the Chaldean or Neo-Babylonian period. Its prophetic writings are those of Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Nahum, and Habakkuk. The Northern Kingdom having by this time disappeared, all of these prophets proclaimed their messages to the little southern kingdom of Judah of which Jerusalem was the sacred capital. The book of Zephaniah is a fiery proclamation of judgment associated with the advent of the "Day of Jehovah." The book of Jeremiah is a record of the tragic experiences, the pathetic warnings and pleadings, and the lofty spiritual conceptions of a great prophet. Nahum is a prophet pronouncing solemn judgment upon the Assyrian Empire. Habakkuk proclaims a message of faith to a questioning and discouraged people.

The Exile represents the period of years spent by the people of Judah in Babylonian captivity. The prophetic writers of this period are three: Obadiah, who prophesies the fall of the land of Edom; Ezekiel, who offers consolation and instruction to the discouraged exiles; and Second Isaiah, who is the unknown author of chapters XL–LV in the book of Isaiah and who, in poetic language of incomparable beauty, sets forth the doctrine of the Servant of Jehovah, in which he makes plain the future and sublime mission of Israel to the Gentile world.

The time after the Exile is known as the period of the rise of Judaism. Prophecy waned, but the writings of six men, who arose to stem the evil tide of the times, remain to attest to the strength of the prophetic movement. They are: those of Haggai

and Zechariah, who delivered messages of encouragement toward the building of the second temple; those of Malachi and Joel, who offered pleas for a firm and loyal faith in God in a time of discouragement and anxious waiting; and those of the authors of the books of Jonah and Daniel. Of this list the book of Daniel stands in a class by itself. It is, as we shall see, not of prophetic, but of apocalyptic character, and belongs, so far as its date of composition is concerned, not to the period of the Exile, but to the second century before Christ. Its author lived during the Maccabean age,[1] and sought to comfort the Jewish people in the great crisis with which they were then confronted.[2] The following is a chronological table of the prophetic books according to the four periods:

I. Eighth Century B. C. or Assyrian Period.
- Amos c. 750
- Hosea c. 735
- Isaiah 740–701
- Micah c. 722

II. Seventh Century B. C. or Babylonian Period.
- Zephaniah c. 626
- Jeremiah 626–586
- Nahum c. 615
- Habakkuk c. 600

III. Period of the Exile.
- Obadiah c. 580
- Ezekiel 592–570
- Second Isaiah c. 550

IV. The Period after the Exile.
- Haggai 520
- Zechariah 520–518
- Malachi c. 450
- Joel c. 400
- Jonah c. 400
- Daniel c. 168

[1] He proclaimed his message about 168 B. C.

[2] For a comparative study of the meaning of the terms, "prophecy" and "apocalypse," consult references to these words in the index.

III. SONG

The devotional and lyrical books of the Old Testament are written in poetry.[1] As specimens of art they are unexcelled. The most popular and easily the greatest of them is the book of Psalms. It is, by common consent, the finest and noblest collection of religious lyrics in all literature. The Old Testament Psalter is in reality a library of five originally independent books.[2] Historically it represents nearly a thousand years of racial history. The vicissitudes and aspirations of thirty generations of Hebrew life are embedded in the immemorial record.

Next in importance is the collection of poems known as Lamentations. This book is composed of a series of five dirges or elegies lamenting the capture and destruction of Jerusalem, by Nebuchadnezzar, in 586 B. C. It is remarkable, alike for its deep and studied pathos and for its use of the peculiar literary form which was found adaptable to its theme.

The third of the group of lyrics is the Song of Solomon. It is an Oriental poem of rare beauty. Its setting is dramatic; in style and poetic concept it represents a truly Oriental intermingling of realism and romance. The aim of its author was to sing the praises of the loyalty of love. The symbolical interpretation which was given it in order to teach a spiritual lesson was wholly justified; but such spiritual significance as it now has to Christians was not originally inherent in the book. It was written some time after the Exile and belongs, in all probability, to the Greek period.

IV. RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY

The outstanding book of this type is one named after a character of remote Hebrew antiquity called Job. As a work of

[1] They are not, however, the only poetical writings of the O. T. Besides the major portion of Job and Proverbs, and the prophetic books which are throughout highly poetical, lyrical fragments are to be found in abundance throughout the entire O. T.

[2] The five-fold division of the Psalter, as it appears at present, is as follows: I. Psalms 1–41; II. Psalms 42–72; III. Psalms 73–89; IV. Psalms 90–106; V. Psalms 107–150. This division is supposed to have been made in imitation of the books of the Pentateuch.

literature alone this philosophical drama takes high rank among the writings of the Old Testament. Its religious insight and profound penetration into the purpose and aim of life are amazing. Its theme is the age-old problem of human suffering. The author lays no claim to its absolute solution; instead he counsels an unfailing trust in God in Whose hands is the keeping of all life. The book reflects the sadness and depression and the great spiritual struggle of the period which followed the building of the second temple.

The Book of Proverbs is a compendium of practical religious philosophy, a library of maxims containing the accumulated wisdom of the centuries. Its theme is the praise of that wisdom whose beginning is the fear of God. The Old Testament contains no nobler tribute to the beauty and essentially divine character of the moral life. The collection of Proverbs, in its present completed form, dates from the period of Jewish contact with Greek thought.

Finally there is the Book of Ecclesiastes. No other book in the Old Testament is so typical of the Hebrew wisdom literature of the time. Its author belongs to that celebrated group of characters called sages—men who gave little time directly to questions of religion, but who confronted with resoluteness the fundamental moral problems of life. In this book the daring attempt is made to investigate current opinions concerning the actual value of life itself. The writer does not rely upon the inspiration of an ideal; he falls back upon his own personal experience, and his words are words of disillusionment. His pessimism, however, does not prompt him to give up his faith in God. It is the manifest meaninglessness of life, so incompatible with his faith in God, that constitutes the problem. With Proverbs, the book belongs to the Greek period.

The New Testament

The twenty-seven books of the New Testament fall naturally into four classes: (1) Gospel, (2) History, (3) Letters, and (4) Prophecy.

I. GOSPEL

The four Gospels are the primary sources of information for our study of the life and teachings of Jesus.[1] They contain the most familiar and frequently-quoted passages of sacred scripture.

Three of the Gospels bear marked resemblances to one another. They are Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They have, for this reason, come to be known as the Synoptic Gospels. Their similarity is attributable to their continued use of certain common historical sources. The exact time of their composition is unknown; the approximate dates are as follows: Mark, between 65 and 75 A. D.; Matthew, between 70 and 80 A. D.; and Luke, about 80 A. D. Mark's Gospel is brief and fragmentary; it is a Gospel of memoirs written for Roman Christians, emphasizing the miracles and the strenuous public life of Jesus. It is the Gospel of Christ, the ministering and suffering servant of God. Matthew's Gospel proceeds from an Old Testament background; although its outlook is at first Jewish, it later becomes world-wide; its emphasis is upon the teachings and words of Jesus; it views his character and mission throughout from the standpoint of its kingly aspects. The Gospel of Luke is the most nearly scientific and literary of the three Synoptics. It is the work of a Gentile writer. The spirit of humanitarianism and of cosmopolitanism breathes from every page. Its portrait of Jesus is the work of an artist; it charms the reader into a life of spiritual surrender and allegiance. It is the Gospel of Jesus the Son of Man.

The Gospel of John belongs in a class by itself. It was written late in the first Christian century.[2] It reflects clearly the thought influences of a rapidly changing Christian church. Two generations have passed since the death of Jesus, and current opinions concerning him have by now become expressly theological. The Synoptic Gospels are historical; they may be re-

[1] In addition, the writings of Paul, which antedate the completed Gospels, imply an acquaintance with Jesus' ministry, and reflect the truths He taught.

[2] Probably about 90 A. D.

garded in a very real sense as biographies of Jesus. The Fourth Gospel is philosophical; it is the sublime product of meditation upon the divine character and mission of the eternal Christ. In order to get a true conception of the life and of the teachings of Jesus, the four Gospels must be read together, and their teachings coördinated.

II. HISTORY

The only writing of pure history in the New Testament is the Book of the Acts. This book is of extraordinary importance as a record both of the origin of the Christian church and of the early development of Christianity as a world religion. It furnishes the natural and necessary background for a study of the significant body of New Testament writings known as the Letters and Epistles. Being the work of Luke, the author of the third Gospel, and written immediately thereafter, it should be read with that Gospel for a clear understanding of the origin and early growth of the Christian faith.

III. LETTERS AND EPISTLES

Twenty-one letters and epistles appear in the New Testament. Some of these are distinctly personal messages, properly called "letters." Others were intended to serve purely as a means of religious instruction or edification, and are more aptly named "epistles." Of these first messages of Christian correspondence, thirteen are commonly attributed to Paul. The letters may be conveniently divided into three groups: (1) the Missionary group; First and Second Thessalonians, Galatians, First and Second Corinthians, and Romans; (2) the Prison group: Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians; (3) the Pastoral group: First Timothy, Titus, and Second Timothy.

Paul was a master of the art of letter-writing. His letters breathe the spirit of the evangelist and teacher. They were occasioned by a practical need, and deal in a thoroughly human yet intensely spiritual way with questions of Christian conduct

and belief. The Thessalonian letters were written from Corinth during Paul's second missionary journey, about 50 A. D. They owe their origin to the current Christian expectation of the second coming of Christ. Very early they became a kind of manual within the Christian church concerning the popular doctrine of the "last things." Galatians was probably written from Antioch in 52 A. D., during the brief interim between Paul's second and third missionary journeys. It was Paul's missionary Magna Charta. In it he set forth the claims of his Christian Gospel and furnished his enemies, the adherents of Judaism, with the full credentials of his own apostleship. The Corinthian letters followed three years later, in 55 A. D. They belong to Paul's third missionary journey. They were written from Ephesus and Macedonia. In the New Testament they appear as two letters; in reality, according to their own internal evidence, there are four: First Corinthians contains, in whole or in part, the correspondence of three occasions.[1]

The Corinthian letters are a compendium of autobiographical, doctrinal, and practical information. More clearly than any other of his writings, they give us an insight into the pastoral life and experiences of Paul. The letter to the Romans stands as a worthy climax to the missionary group of Paul's writings. Coming at the end of the third of the great missionary journeys of the apostle, it represents the ripened fruit of his evangelistic career. In it Paul gives us the substance of his whole philosophy of the Christian life: it is a life of spiritual regeneration, of divine sonship, of fellowship with Christ, of spiritual freedom, and of an assurance of a glorious immortality.

The group known as Paul's prison letters reveals an added aspect of his versatile nature. It belongs to the period of his Roman imprisonment between 56 and 61 A. D. The letters radiate a spirit of reflective peace and tranquillity which appears in marked contrast to the energetic and militant zeal of Paul's earlier writings. They mingle retrospect with prospect, earnest pleading with exultant praise, the note of authority with the ministry of love. Philippians records the optimism and triumph

[1] See index for reference to Cor. correspondence.

of the Christian faith; Philemon is the token of a treasured Christian friendship; Colossians is an exalted tribute to the person of Jesus Christ; Ephesians, the natural sequel of Colossians, extols the strength and blessings of the Christian church.

If the Pastoral Epistles may be regarded as the actual work of Paul, they point to an added period in his life not mentioned in the Book of the Acts. They imply his release from imprisonment in Rome and his rearrest following a short intervening visit to the churches which had been established by him during his evangelistic campaigns in the East. First Timothy and Titus, on this assumption, were written during this period of intervening freedom; Second Timothy, when Paul had again been imprisoned and was awaiting the martyrdom which he experienced in the reign of the emperor Nero in 65 A. D.

The remaining eight letters of the New Testament are of varied length and type. The epistle of James is a Jewish-Christian manual of ethical and religious teachings; First Peter is the personal testimony of an apostle who has found faith in Christ, "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled," and who, from his own experience, commends this treasured faith to others; the letter to the Hebrews is a call to living and heroic faith in Jesus Christ in a time of religious crisis; First John is a beautiful and mystical treatise on the character of God and the nature of the Christian life; Second and Third John are personal letters redolent of an atmosphere of Christian devotion; Jude and Second Peter, like the Thessalonian letters, deal once more with the "last days," in which the writers of these two latest of the New Testament writings now find themselves, and from which, in apocalyptic tone, they utter prophecies of the coming of a new millennial era. The exact dates for the General Epistles are very difficult to determine. From their contents we may surmise that they were written between 45 and 125 A. D. The following chronological list may be accepted as reasonably correct: James, c. 45 A. D.; I Peter, c. 64 A. D.; Hebrews, sometime between 64 and 80 A. D.; I John, 90–95 A. D.; II and III John, c. 95 A. D.; II Peter, c. 100 A. D.; Jude, c. 100 A. D.

IV. PROPHECY

The book of Revelation stands alone in the New Testament as a book of prophecy. It is in reality, like the Old Testament book of Daniel, not prophecy at all, but apocalypse. Its aim is an interpretative unfolding of the hidden future through the imaginative use of literary symbolism. Growing out of a period of religious persecution, it is an appeal to Christian loyalty based upon a vision of the earthly advent of Jesus. The coming of Christ is pictured as an event bringing to culmination the divine plan of a regenerated and redeemed human society. It is expressed, in the language of the writer, as "the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven," and as God Himself building His tabernacle among men. Rightly interpreted, this book is among the noblest of New Testament writings. Its radiant outlook upon the future of our individual life, and of human history, makes it worthy of its honored place at the close of the Christian library of sacred scripture.

CHAPTER III

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

I. THE LANGUAGE

THE original language of the Old Testament is the Hebrew, the written and spoken language of Israel's classic age. This age continued down to within a century before the opening of the Christian era. Beginning with that time a certain type of modified Hebrew, called Biblical Aramaic, became the current language of the Jewish people. Instances of its use are found in specific selections in the Old Testament books of Daniel and Ezra, and in occasional words scattered throughout the entire Bible.[1]

The New Testament was originally written in Greek. The only possible exception was the Gospel of Matthew which, according to an early tradition, was first composed in Hebrew.[2]

Although Palestine was, in the days of Jesus, under Roman government, the Greek language was the vehicle both of commercial and of cultural communication. Though a distinct form of Attic Greek, which with the supremacy of Athens [3] became the adopted language of the Greek-speaking world, the Greek of the New Testament exhibits certain elements characteristic of an intimate contact with Hebrew, Roman, and Christian culture and thought. These foreign influences are everywhere so apparent that the Greek of the New Testament appears to the classical scholar as an almost new and original dialect. Occupying a place above the vulgarisms of the spoken

[1] The Aramaic passages in the O. T. are: Daniel II: 4–VII: 28; Ezra IV: 8–VI: 18; VII: 12–26; and Jeremiah X: 11.

[2] The classic quotation attributed to Papias, and now found in Eusebius, Hist. Eccles., VI: 25, is that Matthew wrote the oracles (i. e. the sayings of Jesus) in the Hebrew language, and every one interpreted them as he was able.

[3] C. 500–300 B. C.

language of the populace—while at the same time, because of its utter spontaneity, making a more universal appeal than the premeditated discourses of the literary classics—this simple, yet dignified Greek became a most appropriate agent for the dissemination of the truths of the Christian Gospel. It is commonly known among scholars as Hebraic, Aramaic, Palestinian or Hellenistic Greek; the last-named designation, referring to its use by Greek-speaking Jews, has become the most popular.

II. THE FORMATION OF THE CANON

The word "Canon," as synonymous with the terms "Bible," "Covenant"—meaning testament—and "Holy Scripture," was first used by the church father Athanasius in the fourth century A. D. Literally the word means a rod of measurement; more generally, a rule of faith and life; specifically, as used here, it represents the collection of Biblical books which, because of their loftiness and universality of appeal, came, in the course of the succeeding generations, to be recognized as sacred and inspired books of divine revelation.

The establishment of this library of sacred literature began, of course, with the Old Testament. As early as the second century before Christ, the writings which formed the main body of Hebrew literature had been divided into three differentiated groups, according to their accredited quality or rank. First in order, and of foremost importance, stood the Torah, or Law. It comprised the first five books of the Bible. Next came the books of the Prophets, which were arranged in two sections: (1) the Former Prophets which included the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings; (2) the Latter Prophets to which belonged Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve Minor Prophets of the English Old Testament. The remaining Old Testament writings, though of diverse type, constituted the third group known as the Hagiographa, or Sacred Writings. These were the books of Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, and Chronicles.

The story of how the books of the New Testament came to find a place beside those of the Old Testament as inspired scripture is full of interest and significance. Their adoption was inevitable, but the steps leading thereto were taken gradually. The frequent references of Jesus, and of the early apostles, to the writings of the Old Testament, are convincing proof of the regard in which these books were held at that time. The Jewish Scriptures were read in Christian places of worship and formed the basis of the moral and social life of the early church. Their point of view upon many spiritual questions is clearly reflected in certain New Testament writings.[1] Slowly, however, as time passed, certain changes began to appear. Christianity was a growing faith; and, as is the law of all living and growing things, the old was compelled gradually to give way to the new. The period of struggle, which preceded that of reconciliation, is itself evident in the writings of the New Testament.[2] Christianity, as it developed by degrees into an independent historical movement, began to create its own sacred literature. The rudimentary Gospels and the writings of Paul formed its literary nucleus. The growing body of religious teachings which surrounded the life and ministry of Jesus became steadily more and more familiar. It served as the basis of the Christian evangelism of the early apostles and of Paul. Thus it won its first independence and recognition as holy scripture.

As early as 95 A. D., quotations from what later became the New Testament appeared in the writings of the church Fathers.[3] With their authenticity established, the words of Jesus and the letters of the apostles were granted the validity of sacred scripture. Gradually, as they assumed definite literary forms, the New Testament came into being. By the middle of the second century its recognition by the apostolic Fathers and

[1] For example, the Messianic note in the Gospel of Matthew, the high-priesthood of Jesus in the N. T. Epistle to the Hebrews, and the apocalypticism of Daniel in the book of Revelation.

[2] The reader need only compare the letter to the Galatians with the Epistle of James to note how the Law and the Gospel existed side by side to the end of the N. T. period.

[3] Clement of Rome, 95 A. D.; Ignatius, 115 A. D.; Polycarp, 115 A. D.

the early Christian apologists had become so general that its canonization was begun.[1] One of the first attempts at the formation of a New Testament canon was made by the prominent anti-Jewish Gnostic, Marcion.[2] His bold classification of the New Testament writings, upon the basis of his own theological conception, led to a careful study of their comparative merits. By the end of the second century all of the writings of the present New Testament, except James, Third John, and Second Peter, were beginning to be widely quoted and recognized as Scripture.[3] The challenge of the Gnostic heresy, by its own intermingling of Greek, Judaistic, and Christian teachings, had helped the church to discover that it had in these writings a doctrinal and spiritual treasure of incalculable worth. Some of them, like Paul's letter to the Colossians, and the Epistles and Gospel of John, dealt at first hand with false philosophy which had crept into the early church. Nothing could prevent such writings as these from being regarded as divinely inspired and therefore worthy of a place by the side of those of the Old Testament canon.

The third century opened with the emergence of the Ancient Catholic Church. It appeared as a compactly organized institution prepared to function according to law and order. It marked the rise of the ecclesiastic to supersede the philosophical and scriptural theologian. The church developed officials who arose to speak with authority. Montanism, which appeared as a reaction against this novel ecclesiastical tendency, ran into the

[1] Among the Apost. Fathers, the one most deserving of special mention is Papias, the author of a five-volume work, "The Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord," frequently quoted by the historian, Eusebius, of the fourth century. The greatest of the early apologists was Justin Martyr, d. 100 A. D.

[2] Marcion was born in Asia Minor in 150 A. D. His identification of matter with evil, and his exaggerated contrast of the law of Moses with the Gospel as preached by Paul, classified him among the early Christian heretics.

[3] The men through whose work at this time the process of N. T. canonization was largely carried on were Irenæus, the doctrinal apologist against Gnosticism (130–202 A. D.); Tertullian, the first Latin theologian (160–220 A. D.); and Clement of the school of Alexandria, who taught his conception of a possible reconciliation between Christian theology and Greek philosophy during the closing years of the second Christian century.

opposite extreme of an ascetic apocalypticism. Almost suddenly it became evident that the period of scriptural productivity had, more than a century ago, reached its close. The era of inspiration lay in the past. The ultimate authority concerning questions of Christian faith and doctrine, it was realized, was invested in the writings of the first generation of Christian apostles. These events substantially marked the completion of the New Testament canon.

The individual scholarship and ecclesiastical councils of several succeeding centuries, however, were required to secure its complete and universal acceptance. Directed by the judgment and spiritual leadership of such scholars as Origen of Alexandria, Eusebius of Cæsarea, Chrysostom of Antioch, and Jerome and Augustine, the churches, both in the East and in the West, arrived at length at an adoption of our present-day New Testament. The order of priority as applied to its writings was the following: first, the Four Gospels; then, the Acts and the Pauline letters; after them, Hebrews, First John, First Peter and Revelation; finally, James, Second and Third John, Jude, and Second Peter. The history of the canon may be said to come to its formal close with the Third Council of Carthage, in 397 A. D.[1]

III. TRANSLATIONS AND REVISIONS

During the centuries that followed the Council of Carthage, the Bible gradually became the book of Western civilization. Century by century it laid the foundation of European life, and its history became the history of the Christian church. Notwithstanding this fact, however, the Bible itself passed through a period of time during which it remained a comparatively closed and hidden book. It was copied chiefly in the Latin language, and known only to learned ecclesiastics. Its authority as a source book of religious teaching was undisputed. However,

[1] The O. T. canon which was, as we have said, practically complete, and as it is today by the beginning of the Christian era, was formally ratified by the Jewish leaders in the Council of Jamnia, c. 95 A. D.

as a book in daily use for spiritual inspiration, and as a factor in the education of the common masses, it had as yet no real history. Its career as such began with the historic intellectual awakening of the fourteenth century. Thenceforth it became the people's book. The gate which opened for it this way of unexpected opportunity was the invention of printing; and the highway upon which it traveled to bring its gift of blessing to the peoples of Europe was the vernacular language of the land. The pioneer among those to whom the English-speaking people of the world are indebted for a Bible written in their own tongue was the Oxford scholar and translator, John Wycliffe.

The Bible of today is the product of a long and interesting literary history. Its historical forerunners are the ancient Biblical manuscripts which, as copies of the original text, have been preserved for modern times. In addition to these manuscripts there are versions or popular editions of translations made from the original text into Greek, Latin, Syriac, and other ancient tongues. Again, there are several historic paraphrases of the Biblical text, such as, for example, the notable Jewish Targums. The Biblical quotations in ancient literature, especially those found in the writings of the Church Fathers, had also a part in the preparation of the Bible of modern times. Finally there are the translations and versions which date from the invention of printing, in 1454, to the present day.

The time when the ancient Hebrews first acquired skill in the art of writing is unknown. Their earliest writings may have been in the cuneiform, or wedge-shaped, characters of the ancient Babylonians, among whom they learned their first lessons of progress toward civilization. The parent language of the later Hebrew, as well as of the Greek alphabet, was the Phœnician, to which certain primitive Hebrew inscriptions of a comparatively recent discovery bear a marked resemblance. This early Hebrew script of Phœnician origin differs characteristically from the square characters of the modern Hebrew Bible. The latter represent the Aramaic form of writing, which supplanted the Hebrew script sometime between 400 and 100

B. C. The Hebrew language, being typically Semitic, has only consonant characters in its alphabet. The vowel points in present use date back to about the seventh century A. D., when, popularly-spoken Hebrew having long since ceased to exist, Jewish scholars deemed them necessary for the preservation of the original vowel sounds. The transcription thus made subsequently became known as the Massoretic text. This is the standard and accepted text of the Hebrew Bible of today.[1] The first printed edition of the Hebrew Bible appeared in 1488. The oldest Hebrew manuscript known to be in existence is, in all probability, the Manuscript of the Prophets deposited in the library at Petrograd, and commonly dated 916 A. D.

Side by side with the Hebrew text there was the Samaritan Pentateuch. The beginning of Samaritan history dates from the time of the Assyrian invasion of Palestine in the eighth century B. C. The fall of Samaria was followed by an importation into northern Palestine of foreign peoples from the various Assyrian provinces.[2] By the time of Ezra and Nehemiah [3] the Hebrews who had intermingled freely with these imported aliens were known as the Samaritans. The Jews of southern Palestine, after their return from the Babylonian exile, rejected all communication with these people.

The sacred temple of the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim for a time rivaled that of Jerusalem as a place of worship. Here, early in the fourth century B. C., the Pentateuch was adopted as the inspired and sacred book of the Law. It began at once its independent career as a parallel record to the original Hebrew text. In the course of time it passed through a number of versions, which now serve as a valuable basis for comparative Biblical study.

Another edition of the Bible, offering excellent opportunity for a comparative and critical study of the Old Testament text, is the Greek translation called the Septuagint. This Greek Bible

[1] The Massoretes were a family of noted Bible students. The term Massorah means "what is handed down," i. e., the traditional text.

[2] The capture of Samaria took place in 722 B. C.

[3] C. 400 B. C.

has the distinction of being the first translation of the Hebrew scriptures into a foreign tongue. It was the work of Alexandrian scholars who lived during and immediately after the reign of the Egyptian Ptolemy Philadelphus.[1] Its common designation is by the use of the letters LXX, on the basis of a tradition—which, however, lacks authentication—that it was the work of seventy-two translators who completed the task of its production in seventy-two days.

The Septuagint was the Bible of the Greek-speaking Jews in the days of Christ; it was the Bible of the apostle Paul; likewise of the early church Fathers. A further interesting feature of this translation is that it contains, in addition to the books of the Old Testament canon, a collection—of course also translated into the Greek language—of Hebrew sacred writings, of an admittedly lower degree of spiritual inspiration, called the Old Testament Apocrypha. These apocryphal writings were not without definite influence in the shaping of the thought of primitive Christianity. Their apocalyptic tendency is reflected in several of the writings of the New Testament.[2]

A number of valuable Septuagint manuscripts have come down to our own time. The one probably of greatest antiquity is the Oxyrhynchus Fragment, dating back well into the third century A. D.[3] There are five others, however, which, because of their completeness, far exceed it in value and renown. Briefly characterized, they are the following: (1) Codex Vaticanus (B) of the Vatican library in Rome; (2) Codex Sinaiticus (S or X), a fourth century manuscript discovered by Count Tischendorf, a German philologist and Biblical scholar, at St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai in 1844, and later entrusted for safe-keeping to the Imperial library at St. Petersburg; (3) Codex Ephræmi (C), a palimpsest manuscript belonging to A. D., carried from Alexandria to Constantinople in 1621, and

[1] Ptol. Phil. ruled Egypt from 285 to 246 B. C.

[2] Of the O. T. apocrypha, I Maccabees and the book of Ecclesiasticus are extraordinarily valuable books. The first gives us the only Biblical history of the Maccabean struggle of the early second century B. C.; the second surpasses the canonical book of Ecclesiastes in moral idealism, spiritual insight, and inspiration.

[3] It was found at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, in 1903.

at present deposited in the library of the British Museum; (4) Codex Ephræmi (C), a palimpsest manuscript belonging to the fifth century, and in the possession of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris; and (5) Codez Bezæ, (D) dating from the fifth or sixth century A. D., and preserved in the University Library at Cambridge.[1]

These Greek manuscripts include versions of the original New Testament text, as well as of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. They were copied in the Greek uncial, or large capital letters, which continued in use until the opening of the tenth century A. D. All later manuscripts of the Bible—i. e., those dating from the tenth century to the invention of printing—were written in the cursive, or running handwriting then in use. Though, from the critical or historical point of view, less valuable than the more ancient uncials, these cursive manuscripts, because of their comparatively large number and their unusual artistic beauty, are among the most prized of the literary treasures of our day.

IV. THE PRINCIPAL EARLY VERSIONS

Next in importance to the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of the Bible are the Latin translations and versions of both the Old and New Testaments. These fall into two general groups: the African, and the European. It is the latter group with which we are here particularly concerned. To it belongs the classical Latin version, called the Vulgate, which is still, though in a restricted way, in use in our own time.

This work of the eminent scholar Jerome dates back to the early years of the fifth century.[2] For centuries it was the leading Bible of Christendom. The original text of Jerome has not been discovered. This fact, however, serves as no real handicap in its accurate reconstruction: the large number of Vulgate manu-

[1] A palimpsest MS. is one that has been put to more than a single literary use. The Codex Ephr. is so named because a Syriac dissertation by St. Ephræm was later superimposed upon the original writing of the manuscript sheet.

[2] The actual date of the Vulgate is either 384, or some time between 390 and 404 A. D.

scripts now in existence help to point the way, not only to the great Latin original, but also to the Greek and Hebrew texts as they were at the time when Jerome set out to make his translation.

Another version, famous alike for its antiquity and for its bearing upon the study of the Vulgate text, is the Syrian Peshitta. This Bible has become known extensively as the Syrian Vulgate. It has come down to us in several manuscripts which date back as far as the fifth century. Other notable translations of the Bible deserve our careful consideration. They are the following: the Coptic, produced in the region of upper Egypt in the fourth or fifth century; the Ethiopic, an Abyssinian translation of the fourth century; the Gothic, the work of Ulfilas, bishop among the Dacians during the middle of the fourth century; the Armenian, called by F. C. Conybeare one of the most beautiful and accurate of all versions, and traceable to the early fifth century; and, finally, the Arabic used in Syria and Egypt following the invasion of these countries by the Arabs.

The early history of Great Britain may be written almost entirely around one book—the English Bible. Even before the landing of Augustine at Kent, in 597 A. D., Christianity had been planted and had taken root in English soil. Its later phenomenal growth there is attributable to the fact that the Bible, though brought from the continent across the Channel in an alien tongue, very soon became a people's book. The Latin text, which satisfied only the scholar, was submerged in the spoken word which came from the lips of the native-born preacher. As of old among the hills of Galilee, the common people heard the Gospel gladly. The word became life, and its life became the light of a nation.

Before long these spoken messages of Gospel story found their way into writing. By the year 700 Caedmon, a Celtic-Saxon farmer who possessed the gift of poetry, heard the call "Sing to me the first beginning of created things." The result was a completed volume of his paraphrases of Bible story. The dawn of the eighth century found Aldhelm, abbot of Malmes-

bury and later bishop of Sherborne, busily engaged with the first Anglo-Saxon translation of the Psalter. Contemporary with him was Egbert, at work on a translation of the Gospels. Then, in the person of the venerable Bede, appeared the "brightest light in all western Europe in the eighth century." Bede, who began his work about the year 700, was a gifted pioneer translator, a Christian scholar and saint.

Though none of his Gospel translations survived the destructive invasion of the Danes, English literature and Christianity remain his debtor to this day. The story of his death, as told by Cuthbert, his most devoted disciple, is a revelation of both the man and his task. It was the morning of Ascension Day, and the great scholar felt that his end was near. During the previous day he had been dictating his translation of the Gospel of John, and the night had brought him to its closing chapter. "Take up thy pen and write quickly," he said to his clerk. With shortening breath, and amid saintly farewell words to his friends, he labored on into the dark. The last long night was closing in upon the faithful toiler and his task. "Master," whispered the sobbing scribe, "only one sentence more remains." "Write quickly," he replied. "It is done now, it is done," said the clerk a few moments later. "Yes, truly said, it is now finished," were the words of his reply. Then, lying prone upon the floor of his cell, he sang the Gloria, in the midst of which his voice grew faint and his soul took its flight.

The mantle of Bede fell upon King Alfred.[1] A Christian and a noble patron of both moral and intellectual culture, he sought faithfully to promote the spread of Christianity among his people. For his extraordinary religious service history has rewarded him with an undying name.

About a half century after Alfred's death a Christian priest, named Aldred, made a peculiar use of his Latin copy of the Gospels by writing between its lines his own Anglo-Saxon paraphrases. His work was preserved and has become immortal. It is known as the Lindisfarne Gospels, and is considered the oldest version of the entire Gospels in the English language. From that

[1] Alfred lived from 848 to 901.

time forward translations began to multiply with rapidity. Only two of the most outstanding of them can here be mentioned: the translation of Aelfric written about 1000 A. D. (now in the library at Cambridge) and considered second in antiquity to the Lindisfarne manuscript; and the Anglo-Norman "Ormulum," the metrical version of portions of the Gospels and the Acts, belonging to the century following the Norman conquest of Britain, and famous, the world over, for the beautiful twenty-thousand-line manuscript of it exhibited in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.[1]

V. THE ENGLISH BIBLE

Exactly three centuries of English history (1066–1366) lie between the Norman conquest and the public appearance of John Wycliffe. To Wycliffe, the great religious reformer and scholar, whose translation of the Bible effected a combination and fusion of all the varying dialects of the people, belongs—more than to anyone else—the distinction of being the father of our modern English language. During the three hundred years which lay in the immediate past, three languages had contended for supremacy in England: Latin, the language of the church; French, brought in by the conquering Normans and confined, for the most part, to the aristocracy and the court; and Anglo-Saxon, the rising and boldly-championed language of the middle classes and the poor. The rivalry among these languages was long and persistent. The French influence was at first negligible. Then, suddenly, it came into prominence. When, however, in 1204, King John lost Normandy, the tide turned. An estrangement followed which resulted, in 1338, in the Hundred Years' War. In 1362, by Parliamentary adoption, English became the universal and accredited language of the land.

But the task of creating a literature in the newly-developed tongue, which by this time had come to differ greatly from its Anglo-Saxon parent, still remained. At this critical and op-

[1] The date of the Ormulum is c. 1200. The Norman conquest occurred in 1066.

portune time Wycliffe began his work.[1] His translation, completed in 1382, was based upon the Vulgate. He was assisted in the task by able scholars at Oxford, particularly by Nicholas of Hereford, his devoted friend and religious follower. Both men were eminently fitted for their work. Differences of style mark quite definitely the portions of the Bible with which each of the two translators was occupied. Hereford's translation was exact, literal, and learned; Wycliffe's was scholarly, but free, and in language of the common people. The Bible produced by these two men was an almost instant success. The Lollard movement, which sprang up around it, commended it everywhere to the common people. Several years after Wycliffe's death in 1384, his Bible appeared in the revised form in which it is known today.

With the opening of the fifteenth century the Wycliffite movement came to a sudden halt. Oxford, once the seat of liberalism and a refuge for scholars, suddenly became conservative and lent its influence to ecclesiastical intolerance. In 1408 the further translation of the Bible into English was forbidden under penalty of excommunication. For a brief time England turned her attention to other questions in the fields of politics and learning. Then, almost over night, occurred an awakening. Europe found itself in an intellectual, social, and political upheaval. Age-old conventions were forced to give way to the sweep of the Renaissance movement. Europe had turned the corner from medievalism to modern times. University life flourished. Christian scholars, driven from Constantinople by the invasion of the Turk,[2] found refuge in the cities of the North. The printing press was set in motion for the publication of the Latin, the Hebrew, and the Greek Bible.[3] Navigation was opening new ways upon uncharted seas. Science was making new beginnings with the studies of Copernicus, the

[1] Mention should not be omitted of the important work done by Chaucer in giving strength and stability to the newly-developing English language; nor of Gower and Mandeville who, as gifted writers, gave themselves to the same task.

[2] In 1453.

[3] Johannes Gutenberg is reputed to have invented printing from movable type c. 1454. Claxton introduced it into England in 1470.

astronomer, whose conception of the heavens was destined at some time in the not distant future to "dethrone the earth."

The dawn of the Reformation found William Tyndale, a young English scholar, at Oxford, "singularly addicted to the study of the Scripture." Later he went to Cambridge where he became a pupil of Erasmus who, in 1516, published his famous printed edition of the Greek New Testament. Thus equipped and inspired for his life work, Tyndale undertook an English translation of the Bible using as his sources the most original texts then in existence. As he worked he kept in mind his vow once made in the presence of a learned but hostile controversialist: "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause that a boy that driveth a plow shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost."

Great difficulties stood in the way of his undertaking. Driven from London, he went first to Hamburg and to Wittenberg, and thence to Cologne, where he secured a printer for the publication of his New Testament translation completed in 1525. Betrayal and persecution, however, soon caused him to escape up the Rhine to Worms, where the first edition of his New Testament was hurried from the press and secretly shipped into the ports of England. Only a few original copies of Tyndale's work survived the determined effort to effect its obliteration; the best preserved of these is a single copy of the three thousand volume octavo edition issued by the translator upon his arrival at Worms, and now deposited in the Baptist College Library at Bristol, England.

The remaining years until his martyrdom, in 1536, Tyndale spent in revising his first New Testament edition and in making translations, from the Hebrew, of the first books of the Old Testament. His contribution to the literary growth of the English Bible is second only to that of Wycliffe. Wycliffe's Bible helped to give England her language; Tyndale's New Testament, coming from Wittenberg, Cologne, and Worms, brought with it the fires of the Protestant reformation.

Tyndale's translation, despite its excellence, failed to meet with general approval. Its reformational tendencies displeased

the Romanist clergy, and led, in 1536, to the great translator's martyrdom. The work, however, to which he had given himself was fully accomplished. He had created in the mind of England's common people a demand for the Bible in the native tongue. The demand was recognized by Cromwell, the English secretary of state, who forthwith set about to secure the publication of a Bible suitable to both the clergy and the people. The result was the Coverdale Bible, edited by Miles Coverdale, and based upon the Protestant translations of Tyndale, Luther, and Zwingli.

In the meantime John Rogers, an Oxford graduate and friend of Tyndale, occupied himself, first in Antwerp and later in London, with the publication of Tyndale's uncompleted translation of the Old Testament. This version, published pseudonymously, was called the Thomas Matthew Bible, supposedly to obscure its indebtedness to William Tyndale. Presently it was realized that the true sources of this approved version could not long remain hidden. Cromwell, accordingly, once more secured the services of Coverdale for the preparation of a version which should be the outcome of a more independent study of the original Hebrew and Greek texts. The result was the publication of the so-called Great Bible, which, despite its attempts at original scholarship, differed only slightly from the Matthew Bible of John Rogers. The Great Bible immediately became famous. Its stately size and artistic beauty commended it as a book worthy of public display. Accordingly it was ordered to be placed within convenient access of worshipers in every church in the land.

Thus the Bible won its first complete triumph as the book of the nation. Except for a temporary reaction during the last days of Henry VIII, the Great Bible grew in popularity by leaps and bounds. During the brief reign of Edward VI [1] the New Testament alone passed through thirty printed editions. Then followed the five years of the Catholic reign of Mary Tudor. Archbishop Cranmer went to the stake; English Bibles were

[1] 1547–1553.

taken from the churches and burned; scholars fled from England to the Protestant cities of the Continent.

One of the most noted of the free cities of Europe was Geneva. Here, in the home city of Calvin and Beza, the Great Bible was thoroughly revised and republished as the Geneva Bible. The Geneva Bible proved to be the best work of literary merit since the translation of Tyndale. It won at once a position of first rank among the current Biblical versions, and continued to hold it until the appearance of the King James version in 1611.

Between these two notable editions, however, two others intervene which warrant our recognition: the Bishop's Bible, prepared by a company of scholars under the leadership of Archbishop Parker, and remembered chiefly for its portrait of Queen Elizabeth, its graphic illustrations, almanacs, tables, and maps; and the Douay-Rheims version, the work of Catholic scholars who left England for the Continent during the reign of Elizabeth and found congenial surroundings for their task in the Catholic college established alternately at Rheims and at Douai, in Flanders.

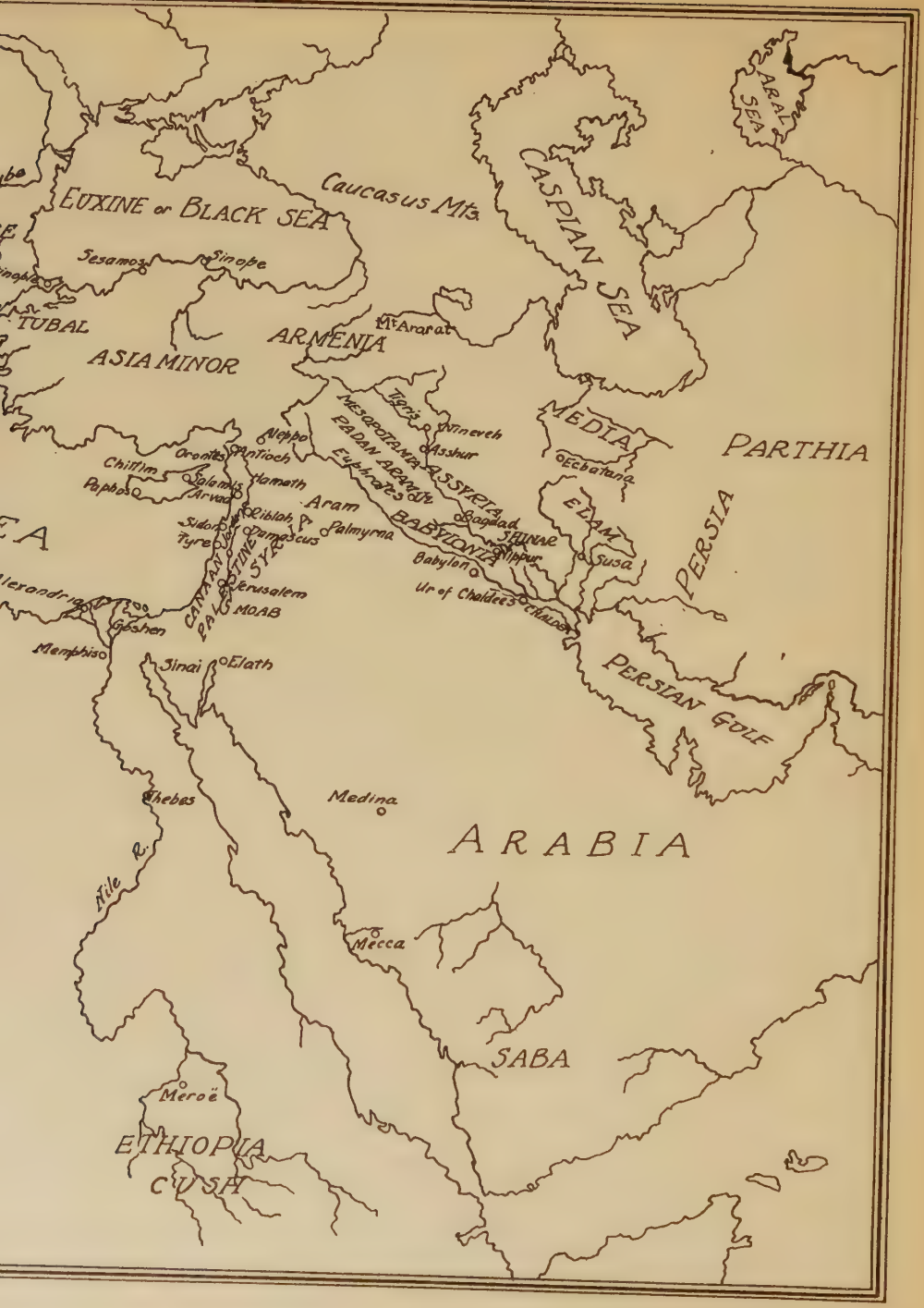
The King James version owed its origin chiefly to four causes: (1) the king's individual inclinations to Biblical scholarship; (2) the Hampton Court conference in which James entertained a Puritan petition for a revision of the Bible; (3) a thoroughly organized staff of trained English scholars; and (4) the lofty ideals of creative literary activity which marked the Elizabethan period. The result achieved proved worthy of the elaborate undertaking. The King James Bible became almost immediately the Bible of the English nation. Its purity of diction, its noble simplicity of style, its straightforwardness, its magnificent musical cadences, its charming treatment of Biblical characters and incidents, its vitality and its sublime spirituality —these, and yet others unlisted, are the characteristics whereby for nearly three centuries this great Bible held the undivided attention of the English-speaking world. As the touchstone of philosophers, the pattern of artists, and the source of comfort

and enlightenment to the countless masses of people, it well deserves the high rank accorded it as England's noblest classic.

In recent times two revisions or translations have appeared which bring to the reader the benefits of modern scientific and Biblical research. They are the Revised Version of 1885, and the American Revised Version of 1901. Modern archæology, and the use of more recently discovered historical materials, including a number of valuable Biblical manuscripts, have contributed toward the possibility of a greatly improved rendering of the Biblical text. Based upon a knowledge of the sources, carefully traced and mastered, and rendered in pure and dignified present-day English, these two versions stand as worthy monuments to modern Biblical scholarship.

THE HEBREW WORLD

Battenhouse & Leitzel


ARAL SEA
CASPIAN SEA
Caucasus Mts
EUXINE or BLACK SEA
Sesamos
Sinope
TUBAL
ASIA MINOR
ARMENIA
Mt Ararat
MEDIA
PARTHIA
Tigris
Nineveh
Asshur
MESOPOTAMIA
PADAN ARAM
Euphrates
ASSYRIA
Aleppo
Antioch
Orontes
Chittim
Salamis
Arvad
Hameth
Paphos
Aram
Riblah
Damascus
Palmyra
Sidon
Tyre
BABYLONIA
Baghdad
Babylon
Nippur
Ur of Chaldees
Chaldea
Ecbatana
ELAM
Susa
PERSIA
PERSIAN GULF
Jerusalem
MOAB
Goshen
Memphis
Sinai
Elath
Thebes
Medina
ARABIA
Nile
Mecca
SABA
Meroë
ETHIOPIA
CUSH

CHAPTER IV

THE ANCIENT WORLD IN BIBLE TIMES

THE history of the Hebrews is not that of an isolated nation or race. On the contrary, to tell the story of Israel is to come into contact with the majority of the outstanding civilizations of antiquity. The migration of Abraham was from Ur, now known to have been the center of the remote Sumerian civilization whose existence has been successfully traced as far back as 4500 B. C.[1] The history of Israel from Joseph to Moses is linked with the magnificence of the Pharaohs of Egypt. The period of the Judges was one of long fierce struggle with conglomerate Canaanitish peoples who were in possession of the coveted land of Palestine. Saul's career associates Israel with the civilization of ancient Philistia. David's kingdom spread the fame of the Hebrews among the combined nations of the East; Solomon's splendor and reputed wisdom attracted the Queen of Sheba; Ahab's marriage to Jezebel introduced the influence of Phœnicia; Elisha's healing of Naaman illustrates Israel's contact with Syria; the ministry of Isaiah centered about the struggle of the Hebrew state against the invasion of Assyria; and that of Jeremiah about the conquest and capture of Jerusalem during the period of Babylonian supremacy.

Similarly, the foundations of Judaism were laid under the protecting influence of the kingdom of Persia. The whole body of Old Testament wisdom literature bears signs of its indebtedness to Greek thought, and the close of Jewish Palestinian history is marked by a futile and tragic struggle against the world empire of Rome.

[1] Recent archæological investigation under the direction of Great Britain, in collaboration with the University of Pennsylvania, has resulted in the discovery, in Ur, of the ruins of a temple now held to be the oldest building of positive identification in existence.

Among ancient peoples who, during successive historical periods, contributed largely to the national destiny of the Hebrews, there are seven which compel our necessary attention. It will sufficiently serve our present purpose to be able to discover who these peoples were, where they lived, what degree of civilization and culture they had attained at the time of their contact with the Israelites, and how they came to exert a definite influence upon Bible history.

I. BABYLONIA

The ancient Babylonians were Semites who migrated from eastern Arabia shortly before 3000 B. C. and settled in the lower regions of the Mesopotamian valley. They owed their civilization to a people whom historians call the Sumerians, a non-Semitic race of great antiquity and already far advanced in culture. The struggle for the possession of the territory above the Persian Gulf resulted favorably for the Babylonians. It followed an invasion from Arabia by a people known in Old Testament times as the Amorites. Two chief cities became the center of government; Ur, of ancient Sumerian origin, and Babylon, which later became the capital of the whole Babylonian empire.

In the course of time the first ancient Babylonian dynasty was established, in which the sixth ruler was the far-famed Hammurabi, the Amraphel of Genesis XIV: 9, whose reign may be dated at approximately 1900 B. C. There are indications that the influence of this great Babylonian monarch extended westward as far as Syria and Palestine. One of these is found in an inscription in which Hammurabi calls himself the King of the West Land; another appears in the Tell el-Amarna letters written in the cuneiform, or wedge-shaped, script of ancient Babylonia, and contains, in addition to important personal correspondence, certain fragments of myths whose origin is clearly traceable to the Babylonian stories of the Creation and the Flood.[1] The extent of the influence of these Babylonian stories

[1] The Tell el-Amarna letters, more than 200 in number, were discovered in 1887, in the village of Tell el-Amarna, in Egypt. They are, for the most part, letters

upon our Biblical narrative is as yet an unsettled question. It will receive our attention in a later chapter.

II. EGYPT

The ancient civilization of the Nile was one of the most renowned and glorious of all time. The Pyramids, the mighty sepulchers of the Pharaohs, present awe-inspiring evidence of the existence of a very old and great people. The close relationship of the Egyptians, both racially and historically, to the Hebrews, gives the former a place of special significance in the thought of the Bible student. The ancestry of the Egyptians is traceable to three distinct racial sources: (1) the Ethiopians, who had formerly migrated from Arabia and occupied the region of the Upper Nile; (2) the Semites, likewise immigrants from Arabia, who settled in the lower valley of the Nile; (3) certain non-Semitic races, who came from the regions of the Mediterranean, and who, at an early time, mingled with the Semitic occupants of the land. The influence of these contributory races, which form the primitive background of the Egyptians, is noticeable in both their language and their religion.[1]

Originally the land of Egypt was divided into two separate political territories: the southern kingdom of the upper Nile, and the lower and stronger kingdom of the North. When, as early as 3500 B. C., the southern kingdom had grown sufficiently in strength, a united monarchy was established which lasted

written by Egyptian governors in charge of the territories of Syria and Palestine, and calling upon the Pharaoh for armed assistance against the hostile Hittites who, under their king, Shubbiluliuma, were growing tremendously in power in the North. The date generally assigned to the Tell el-Amarna tablets is c. 1400 B. C.

[1] The language of the Egyptians was originally pictorial. This is seen in the hieroglyphic characters found on the monuments. Later, for use on papyri, the hieratic, a convenient script of a cursive character in which the signs came to have a more purely symbolical meaning, took the place of the hieroglyphics. Still later the demotic, the simplest form of symbolical script, was developed.

The two outstanding features of the ancient Egyptian religion were: (1) the extensive animal worship which seems to us so incongruous with the lofty religious conceptions associated with it; and (2) the advanced conception of individual immortality as set forth in the renowned Book of the Dead, and exemplified in the practice of mummification.

nearly a thousand years. This period between 3500 and 2500 B. C. was the period of the great Pyramids. Next came a period of internal development, culminating in the famous XII Dynasty of about 2000 B. C., and called the Golden Age in Egyptian history. It was followed, after an interval of decline, by an equally notable period known as that of the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings. The Hyksos were Asiatic invaders, probably Semites, and were hated by the native Egyptians. They entered Egypt about 1650 B. C., and settled in the eastern region of the Delta. For a whole century they held Egypt in their control. When, at length, they were driven from the country, a new era dawned in Egyptian history. The kingdom gave way to the establishment of the first Egyptian empire.

The invading Hyksos had opened the door into Egypt from western Asia. When, therefore, Egypt again found herself free, she herself passed through that door. It meant the passing of the nation from an era of comparative peace to one of national and military development.

About two centuries later Egypt experienced a great religious awakening and reform.[1] Amenhotep, the king, himself the leader, rejected the popular polytheism of his day and became a monotheistic worshiper of Aton who was the deity conceived as the spirit or power behind the sun. The reform thus undertaken was, however, beyond the appreciation of the masses and accordingly gained little popularity. Egypt preferred a military to a religious leader at this time of internal decay and threatening troubles in Syria and Palestine. This was the period of the Tell el-Amarna tablets, which present us with valuable historical information concerning Egypt and Palestine during the middle of the fourteenth century B. C. These tablets are in large part letters from persons in official positions for Egypt in Palestine and Syria, in which the writers make urgent appeals for help against foreign invaders. Among them are the Habiri, who are, by some historians, identified with the Hebrews of Bible times.

[1] The religious awakening came with the beginning of the reign of Amenhotep IV, who ascended the throne c. 1375 B. C.

The next and last period in Egyptian history of especial interest to the Biblical student is that of the Israelite oppression which led to the Exodus and the founding of the Hebrew nation. There is substantial ground for the belief that the Pharaoh of the Oppression was Rameses II, and that Merneptah, his successor, was the Pharaoh of the Exodus.[1] The fortunes of Egypt were frequently involved in the struggles of the Hebrew nation in the centuries that followed. The two most important instances of intimate historical contact between them were: (1) the period of the declining years of Judah's national history; and (2) the Ptolemaic period of Greek contact with the Judaistic community several centuries after the Jewish Exile.[2]

III. ASSYRIA

The portion of Assyria's history which has to do with our present study begins approximately 1350 B. C. and ends with the fall of the Assyrian empire in 612 B. C.[3] This historical epoch may be divided according to the four periods of Assyria's national expansion. The first of these need here only be mentioned. It was the century of the awakening of the Assyrian national consciousness, of the challenge of Babylonian supremacy, and of the military campaign westward to the bank of the Euphrates river. The second, which followed the nation's recovery from a century of political decadence, began with Tiglath Pileser I,[4] who extended the influence of Assyria westward to the regions of the Mediterranean. The successes of this campaign, however, were likewise brought to a temporary halt, this

[1] Ram. II died in 1234 B. C.; Merneptah in 1225 B. C.

[2] The earliest direct and indisputable reference, from an archæological source, to the Hebrew people as the people of Israel, is found in an inscription enumerating the victories of Merneptah II. The words, "Israel is lost; her seed is not," are best interpreted as the Pharaoh's account of Israel's disappearance from Egypt.

[3] Heretofore the fall of Nineveh has been placed at 606 B. C. Recent information has come to light in the form of an Assyrian document, now in the British Museum, which fixes the date at 612 B. C. See J. M. P. Smith, "The Prophets and their Times," p. 122.

[4] The reign of Tigl. Pil. I. extended from 1120 to 1100 B. C.

time by the establishment and extraordinary expansion of the Hebrew monarchy during the reign of King David.[1]

Soon after the division of the Hebrew kingdom, following the death of Solomon,[2] Assyria entered upon a third period of military aggressiveness and territorial expansion. The first task confronting her was to overthrow the Chaldeans who were firmly entrenched in the region of southern Mesopotamia; the second was to hold in check the approaching Medes, a non-Semitic people of Aryan stock, who were steadily pressing westward from the region of the Tigris; the third was to send an army across the Euphrates into Syria and Palestine. The first two undertakings met with success; so also, in all probability, the third would have, had it not been for the steady resistance of Damascus under king Hazael.[3] For the time, Assyria found her plan, to subdue completely all the territory from the Euphrates westward to Phœnicia, frustrated.[4] Though later forced into vassalage, Damascus was able to hold Assyria at bay until domestic difficulties and troublesome neighbors in the East caused a temporary withdrawal of her hostilities in the West.

Meanwhile the two Hebrew kingdoms of Israel and Judah, freed from the yoke of Damascus, entered upon an era of marked national prosperity; Israel under Jeroboam II, and Judah under Uzziah. This was the time when the first voice of prophecy as a new movement in Israel was heard among the people.[5] At this very time, however, the Assyrian empire was preparing the way for its fourth great period of political expansion. Under the extraordinary leadership of six successive kings, who ruled from 745 to 626 B. C., Assyria accomplished

[1] The Hebrew kingdom attained its greatest strength shortly after 1000 B. C.

[2] 933 B. C.

[3] C. 840 B. C.

[4] The close contact of Assyria with Palestine, beginning with the period of Shalmaneser III, is shown in the archæological record of the so-called Black Obelisk, an alabaster monolith discovered at Nimrud in 1846, in which reference is made to seven campaigns conducted against the country to the West. It was in the campaign of 842 B. C., undertaken especially against Hazael of Damascus, that Shalmaneser claims to have overpowered Israel and exacted tribute from Jehu, who in the inscription is erroneously designated as of the dynasty of Omri.

[5] It was the day of Amos who preached in the Northern Kingdom about 750 B. C.

what she set out to do: first, by securing her position of supremacy in the East; second, by extending her authority beyond Damascus into Phœnicia; and finally, by subjugating Palestine and winning a military victory against Egypt. The events which signalized these victories followed one another in rapid succession. Tiglath Pileser IV regained Assyrian control over Babylonia, and, in 732 B. C., laid successful siege to the city of Damascus. Shalmaneser V subdued the revolting provinces of Phœnicia and northern Israel. Sargon II captured Samaria, the capital of the northern Hebrew kingdom, secured temporary Assyrian supremacy over Egypt, won notable victories in northern Arabia, and captured Ashdod, the border capital on the Philistine plain. Sennacherib, in Phœnicia and Palestine, subdued rebellions which had been instigated by Egypt and Chaldea. Esarhaddon and Ashur-bani-pal undertook and brought to completion successful military operations against Egypt.[1] The very excess of Assyria's victories led to her downfall. Like many another arrogant world power, she waged war against herself by the wanton destruction of her own man power. Her leaders had made Assyria an indisputable, but exhausted conqueror. But it was not they alone who were aware of this tragic fact. Assyria's enemies, in both the East and the West, knew it and rejoiced in it.

Almost suddenly the tide turned; the barely defeated became the bold oppressors; and the proud empire lost in a decade what

[1] The dates of the reign of these six Assyrian monarchs are the following: Tigl. Pil. IV, 745–727; Shalmaneser V, 727–722; Sargon II, 722–705; Sennacherib, 705–681; Esarhaddon, 681–668; Ashur-bani-pal, 668–626.

The young and rising empire of Chaldea was Assyria's rival in the East; Egypt in the West.

Sennacherib's conquests in Palestine, culminating in the siege of Jerusalem, in 701 B. C., at the time of the close of Isaiah's prophetic ministry, are of especial interest to the historical student of the Old Testament. In addition to the two Biblical accounts found in II Kgs. XVIII–XIX, XXXVI and XXXVII, archæological research has brought to light a remarkable historical inscription left by Sennacherib, the Assyrian ruler, in which he tells the story of his conquests and subjugation of the rulers of Palestine. His reference to Hezekiah "shut up like a caged bird in Jerusalem" is an apt authentication of the Biblical narrative. The most interesting portion of this Assyrian inscription is found in the second and third columns of the so-called Taylor Cylinder, and may be read in translation in Professor F. C. Eiselen's volume "The Christian View of the Old Testament," p. 138.

it had won by the struggle of a century. The revolt began with Egypt, which secured its freedom and at once entered upon a period of prosperity. It was next taken up by the Chaldeans who gained possession of Babylonia and founded the Neo-Babylonian or Chaldean empire. Encouraged by Assyria's waning strength, the Medes, a people of recently established monarchial government, made successful invasions across the Tigris from the east. Finally from the far north, sweeping first southward and then westward across Asia, came the hordes of barbarous people known in later times as the Scythians. Like a tottering giant the empire of Assyria went to its ruin. Nineveh fell in 612 B. C., and its glory went to ashes, to live thereafter only on the densely-peopled pages of history.

IV. CHALDEA

The Chaldean or Neo-Babylonian empire retained its supremacy as a world power for only seventy-three years,—the years between the fall of Assyria, in 612 B. C., and the conquest of Babylon, in 539 B. C., by the Persian army under Cyrus. This period of Chaldean rule, though brief, is of extraordinary significance to the student of Old Testament history; it involves the years of the fateful decline and final dissolution of the Hebrew kingdom, followed by those of the long and testing Babylonian exile.

The events of the period, exclusive of those recorded in Biblical history, are few. The fall of Assyria was followed by a speedy division of the empire between the Babylonians and the Medes. The Medes occupied the territory lying eastward; the Babylonians chose the region toward the west, including Syria and Palestine. The contest for supremacy in the West was, as of old, with Egypt. The decline and fall of Assyria had made Egypt master of the territory of the eastern Mediterranean. In 608 B. C., four years after the fall of Nineveh, Pharaoh Necho was leading an Egyptian army northeastward across Palestine and toward the Euphrates. King Josiah of Judah, who had dared to impede his progress, was defeated and slain at the

battle of Megiddo. In 605 B. C. Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar, the Babylonian king, set out with an army upon his western expedition. Egypt met Babylonia at Carchemish, on the Euphrates, and endured a crushing defeat. From that time until its own fall, Babylon ruled supreme over Syria and Palestine. When, in 597 B. C., King Jehoiakim of Judah, under the instigation of Egypt, declared a rebellion, Nebuchadnezzar arrived and laid siege to Jerusalem. Seven thousand of the leading inhabitants of the capital city, together with Jehoiachin, the young and newly-crowned king, and Ezekiel, the prophet, were drafted and deported to Babylon as a guaranty of Judah's good behavior. Ten years later, following a repeated revolt, Jerusalem was captured and devastated, and Judah entered upon her period of Babylonian captivity.

Babylon's conquest in the West was followed by twenty years of prosperity during the remainder of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. Then, in the hands of weaker kings, the empire rapidly declined, until, under Nabonidus—who appointed his son, Belshazzar, as regent of the failing empire—it yielded to the conquering army of Cyrus.[1]

V. PERSIA

Viewed perspectively, the history of the Persian empire falls into three periods. The first was a period of rapid military successes, of remarkable territoral expansion, and of political organization. The builders of the empire were three: (1) Cyrus, who subdued Babylonia, extended his supremacy over Iran, and won Asia Minor by his defeat of Crœsus, king of Lydia; (2) Cambyses, who effected the conquest of Egypt and secured Persia's hold on Palestine and Syria; and (3) Darius I, who led his indomitable Persian army across Asia Minor and laid his conquering hand on the Greek provinces of Thrace and Macedonia.

The second period was one of military and civil organization.

[1] Nabonidus, or Nabu-na'id, as he should be called, (like Amenhotep IV, of Egypt, eight centuries before him) took no interest in military or administrative affairs.

The whole empire was divided into twenty satrapies, or political principalities, governed by official satraps who were responsible to the king. Each satrapy was under the direct rule of a group of regional governors responsible to the satrap. The satrapy of which, during the Persian period in Biblical history, the land of Palestine formed a part, was called "Beyond-the-River," i. e., the territory west of the Euphrates. The period of internal development reached its climax in the reign of Artaxerxes III.

The third period was one of rapid degeneration and decline. The causes for this reversal of fortune were two: extraordinary material wealth; and a succession of weak kings. Luxury was followed by moral decline, bad government by civil rebellion, internal stagnation by foreign aggression. As was to be expected, the chief source of trouble came from the far west. After a prolonged period of defeat and humiliation, the Greeks won their first decisive victory at Marathon. Ten years later another victory at Salamis not only set the Greeks free from Persian domination, but awakened in them the desire for counter conquests in the East. The remaining years, until the eastward march of the conquering army of Alexander, were marked by rapid decay. Alexander's victory, in 332 B. C., over Darius III at Issus, closes the history of the Persian empire.[1]

VI. GREECE

Alexander's conquest of the East opened the way for the Hellenization of Asia, Syria, and Egypt. For the first time in history Europe was able to rise to ascendancy over these territories and impress them with the superior strength of her own culture. Palestine, occupying a place at the gateway to the historic empires of the East, was quick to feel the effects of the Greek influence which, emanating chiefly from Alexandria in Egypt, spread with rapidity throughout the land. The first response of Jewish contact with Hellenistic culture was generous and free. The invitation extended to the Jews by Alexander and

[1] The Persian period in Biblical history covers the years from 538 to 333 B. C.

his successors to contribute to the colonization of the principal Greek cities of Europe and the near East was heartily accepted. Prominent Jewish settlements were established in Alexandria, Antioch, Tarsus, Ephesus, and Corinth. These colonists became Greek in all but their religious life; even in this they were strongly influenced by their adoption of Greek speech and of a certain amount of Greek philosophy and culture. The most outstanding example of this Hellenistic influence upon Jewish thought is the work of Philo, the Alexandrian philosopher. Philo was a prominent Jewish scholar who, finding himself thoroughly familiar with both Hebrew and Greek thought, devoted himself to the task of effecting an inner reconciliation between the teaching of Moses and the philosophy of Plato.

The Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures, is further evidence of the close intimacy with which Greek and Hebrew minds were mutually regarded. The Greeks effected their conquest of Palestine, not by force of arms, but through the dissemination of their ideas and ideals. Their victory, accordingly, was both complete and lasting. Even the disappearance of the Greek state did not seriously affect the strength and perpetuity of its culture. It coursed its way as a stream through the vast provinces of later imperial Rome; it is reflected in the teachings of the New Testament; it survives as a penetrating and vitalizing spirit in the civilized life of our day.

There was a period, however, in the late history of the Old Testament when the Greek influence, which had continued unabated for a full century and a half [1] following the death of Alexander, came to a sudden end. Antiochus Epiphanes, the Seleucid and Syrian ruler of Palestine, was apparently not content with the rapid Jewish absorption of Greek culture. He accordingly determined upon a program of coercion whereby Jerusalem was to be made a Greek city, and the sacred temple there a pagan shrine. This arbitrary and senseless act precipitated a crisis which resulted in the well-known Maccabean revolt. The Maccabean War which ensued freed the Jews from

[1] From 323 to 175 B.C.

Greek domination, and terminated in the establishment of a temporary Hebrew state, which continued, through much struggle, to maintain itself for about a century.[1]

Notwithstanding this intense reaction against Hellenism, the Greek spirit remained. It pervaded the court life and policies of the Herods and found adherents among an influential minority of resident Jews. Evidence of its popularity came to be noted in the very architecture of Herod's temple, and even more in the presence, in Jerusalem, of a circus and hippodrome erected by Herod. Though politically superseded by the rule of Rome, Greek supremacy continued undiminished until the beginning of the Christian era; its language became the language of the New Testament, and its philosophy provided the germinal seed-bed for the theology of the Fathers of the early church.

VII. ROME

The contact of Rome with the Jewish state began in 161 B. C., when Judas Maccabeus undertook to establish friendly relations with the Roman emperor for the protection of Palestine against Syrian domination. This friendship was continued under the rule of Jonathan and Simon, the successors of Judas. Later, however, the bitter and petty rivalries of the Maccabean family precipitated a crisis which called for aggressive Roman intervention. In 63 B. C. Pompey, then on his way into Asia, entered Syria. He found it necessary to go down into Judea and, after some hesitancy, to take possession of Jerusalem. This act put an end to the Maccabean state. Rome, at first invited as an intercessor, laid its iron hand upon Palestine and became its master. The Jews found themselves in the grip of a power from which there was to be no release.

The Christian era began with Augustus on the Roman throne and Herod the Great as the potentate of Palestine. Following Herod's death, which occurred shortly after the birth of Jesus,

[1] The Maccabean revolt began about 175 B. C. The Jewish state lasted from 165 to c. 65 B. C.

the territory over which he had been the ruler was divided into three parts to be governed by three of his sons. Archelaus became ethnarch of Judea, Antipas tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip tetrarch of the region toward the northeast, called the Trachonitis. In Rome, Augustus was followed by Tiberius in 14 A. D. In 26 A. D. Pontius Pilate became procurator of Judea. The Roman emperor during the major portion of Saint Paul's ministry was Claudius. Judea, at that time, was first under the rule of Agrippa I, and later governed by procurators, the best-known of whom were Antonius Felix and Portius Festus. Paul's trial and martyrdom took place in the reign of Nero.

The New Testament reader is at first impressed with the apparent indifference or open hostility of the Roman government toward the origin and spread of Christianity. The reason for this impression is that certain groups of New Testament writings, notably the Gospels, the General Epistles, and the book of Revelation, reflect critical periods in the history of the apostolic church. Generally speaking, there were three such crises: (1) the Neroian persecution, beginning about 64 A. D., and directed specifically against the Christians at Rome; (2) the period centering in the destruction of Jerusalem, in 70 A. D., in the reign of the emperor Vespasian; and (3) the severely trying period of the reign of Domitian, about 90 A. D., when the persecution of the Christians grew in intensity and spread eastward as far as Asia Minor.[1]

Apart from these times of persecution—perhaps it would be equally correct to say, through and because of them—Rome could be counted upon to perform the services of an ally rather than those of an enemy to the spread of the Christian gospel. The reasons for this situation are apparent. First there was the unity of the Roman empire, with its centralized form of po-

[1] A fourth period of persecution followed later in the reign of the emperor Trajan, in 112 and 113 A. D. By this time the Christians were punished, not, as in Nero's time, because they were considered to be evil-doers, but because they confessed themselves to be followers of Christ. To be a Christian became, politically speaking, a crime. Yet even at this late period, Rome, true to her policy of opportunism associated with a reasonable sense of social justice, made no special attempt at spying out or hunting down these supposed criminals.

litical government, its system of roads, and its cosmopolitan type of Roman citizenship. Then there was the distinctive recognition which, with only a few exceptions, was accorded to the Jewish population of the empire, and which served as a providential preparation of the Gentile soil for the seed of Christianity. Again, the close contact of the East with the West, made possible by Rome's genius for colonization, acquainted Europe with Oriental religions and philosophies, which, because they were similarly foreign and mystical, paved the way for the greater and nobler message of Christianity. Finally, the survival of Greek culture and of the Greek language among the people of the colonial possessions of the empire made its contribution to the future growth of Christianity. It permitted Greek thought and Greek ideals to flow as an unobstructed current into the veins of the new Christian movement, and thus aided in commending it not only to the heart of the masses, but to the mind of its future theological exponents and defenders.

CHAPTER V

THE LAND OF PALESTINE

THE land of which Palestine forms a small but very significant part deserves, better than any other spot on earth, to be called the mother-land of religion. From it have come the only three great monotheistic faiths which, in the course of time, have become universal world religions.[1] The historical geography of the vast territory called the Arabian Peninsula may be divided into three parts: (1) A vast interior region of desert tableland, made habitable by oases of great fertility, and serving as the home of a nomad people of Semitic blood; (2) a fertile tract of land at the northern and western extremity of the peninsula, bordering on the Taurus Mountains and the Mediterranean Sea, and separated from the desert to the east by two parallel mountain ranges extending southward from Mt. Lebanon and Mt. Hermon; and (3) a small area of land consisting of not more than 10,000 square miles—about 150 miles from north to south, and an average of 50 miles from east to west—situated along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean—a land of rugged and picturesque mountains, of low and fertile plains, of marked diversity of climate, without harbors, an open gateway between two ancient civilizations, and the goal of successive tidal waves of tribal migrations from the far-off North and East. Of these three tracts the first is Arabia, the second Syria, and the third Palestine.

I. ARABIA

This vast tract of land is best described as a huge parallelogram, geographically so tilted as to extend in a general north-

[1] These religions are Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity.

western direction from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. On its right, to the north, it is bounded by the Persian Gulf and, beyond it, by the Euphrates River; on its left, to the south, by the Red Sea and the Isthmus of Suez. The territory of Arabia has a significant archæological history. From its borders, at uncertain intervals, a series of four distinct Semitic tribal migrations took place, which, in the course of the centuries, determined the history of the Biblical world. The first or earliest of these seems to have been a migration southwestward, across the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, into the upper region of the Nile, the land of Cush or Ethiopia. It was followed almost immediately by a second migration westward, across the Isthmus of Suez, into Egypt. From inscriptions relating to the Egyptian mines in the southern extremity of the Sinaitic Peninsula, it may be inferred that the Semites were in possession of this territory as early as 3500 B. C.

Before 3000 B. C. other and larger tribal migrations took place. This time they were toward the north, across the Euphrates into Mesopotamia. Here, after a long struggle with a non-Semitic people historically known as the Sumerians, the first Semites of renowned antiquity established themselves and laid the foundations of the ancient Babylonian empire.

Then, after an interval of several centuries, the tide of migratory movements turned westward. Its coveted goal was the region of the Mediterranean. To the beginning of these westward movements it is now possible to trace the ethnological and the remote historical origin of the races and nations of Bible times. Outlined upon the basis of the data at present available, there were five of these migrations. The first was made up of a detachment of Semitic tribes which wandered westward along the Euphrates at the time of the Semitic invasion of Mesopotamia. The second was a movement which resulted in the establishment of the Amorite civilization, about 2000 B. C. The third brought the Elamites into Palestine. These home-seekers from the far East established a temporary supremacy over Babylon, and made unusually rapid progress toward nation-

ality. They are mentioned in Genesis XIV as belonging to the time of Abraham.[1]

A fourth migration took place about 1700 B. C., when the Canaanites entered Palestine and drove the Amorites up into northern Syria. Simultaneously the Hyksos moved downward into Egypt, subdued the land, and established a dynasty of Pharaohs who ruled Egypt for a century, until about 1550 B. C. Finally came the Arameans, among whom were probably the historical Hebrews, identical, from all appearances, with the Habiri mentioned as invaders of Palestine in the Tell el-Amarna tablets dated about 1400 B. C.

II. SYRIA

Syria has throughout history been a land of strategic importance, first because of its position, and second because of its population. It lies on the borderland between the desert and the sea. To the east is Asia, to the south Africa, to the west Europe. For centuries it has been the highway of the nations' armies and caravans of commerce. Its soil has been the meeting-place and birthplace of races and civilizations. Early in its history Syria learned to look with fear upon the alien and aggressor. Always with its back against the mountains and the sea, it saw the approaching millions from the East, some of them marauders of the desert, others ambitious monarchs in search of rival foes; always they met their enemies and settled their quarrels at its door or within its precincts; and always they

[1] If this Biblical account is in its correct historical context, Abraham, mentioned in Gen. XIV, was an Amorite, and therefore, in all probability, a contemporary of Hammurabi. Hammurabi, also an Amorite, ruled Babylonia at some time near 1900 B. C. If, however, as seems more in accord with Biblical tradition, Abraham was the leader of an Aramean, i. e., Syrian migration, the date for him must be set later, perhaps about 1450 B. C., at the time of the "Habiri" invasion of Palestine, of which mention is made in the Tell el-Amarna Tablets. The picture one gets of the Amorite Abraham, of Gen. XIV, differs considerably from that of Abraham, the Aramean: the Amorite is a soldier and man of marked personal influence and power; the Aramean is a peaceful and quiet sojourner in a land which is his by promise, but not yet by possession.

left it desolate and weakened, and unable to build up its own empire. First there were centuries of inundating migrations from the deserts of Arabia; then came the invading armies of ancient Babylonia and Egypt; after them the Hittites; later the Assyrians, followed by the Egyptians and Chaldeans; then the armies of Darius, of Alexander, and of Pompey,—with the result that Syria was always politically and racially involved but seldom benefited.

When, on the other hand, we consider Syria's contribution to the outside world, the story is completely changed. Syria gave to the world more than she received. Among her hills the prophets of Israel were allowed to proclaim their messages; her soil became a fertile seed-bed for the teachings of both Judaism and Christianity. It was from her borders that Paul, the first great Christian missionary, carried his gospel message across the Ægean, and thence to the heart of the Gentile world. Syria's great gift to the world was religion.

III. PALESTINE

Palestine impresses the careful observer first of all by its diversity of physical characteristics, its variety of climate, and its strange intermingling of races. The land is by nature as well as by history one of striking contrasts. Its snow-bedecked Mt. Hermon, and its sub-tropic lower Jordan valley; the moisture-bearing winds from the Mediterranean, and the treacherous desert sirocco; the city and the village; the Syrian and the Arab; the glory of its past, and the evident barrenness of its present spiritual life,—observations such as these intensify this first impression.

The land of Palestine comprises an area of about ten thousand square miles. Its distance from north to south is approximately 150 miles; from east to west, including the east-Jordan valley, it measures an average of about fifty miles. For purposes of our study it may be divided into four geographical parts: (1) the Maritime Plain—Esdraelon, Sharon, and Philistia; (2) the Central Range—Galilee, Samaria, and Judea; (3)

the Jordan Valley—the Lake of Galilee, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea; and (4) the Eastern Range—Hauran, Gilead, and Moab.

The coastline of the Maritime Plain is regular. With the exception of the modern port of Haifa, there are no suitable harbors. In the north the Mediterranean border is but the coastwise projection of the broad and fertile plain of Esdraelon, which furnishes the natural gateway into Palestine from the east. Further down, where it becomes the beautiful plain of Sharon, it is narrowed to a margin by the rising mountains of Ephraim. Then, again, it widens into the plain of Philistia extending southward into Egypt. This whole lowland region is one of extraordinary beauty and fertility. The outlook upon the sea, the sight of fields of grain and of flocks of grazing sheep, the silver-threaded mountain streams that course their way to the coast, the abundant growth of trees and flowers, including the palm of Philistia and the rose of Sharon, are of immemorial fame.

The Lebanon Mountains, which lie to the north in Syria, are a determining factor in the physical geography of Palestine. From their forests came the materials for the building of Palestine's cities; from their snows came the water, brought down by the Jordan to create and to enrich its historic valley. The whole mountain range, extending southward and forming a broken ridge between the Mediterranean and the Jordan, is but a continuation of the Syrian Lebanons. Traced more in detail, beginning at the north, this central territory divides itself into five parts: (1) the mountains of Galilee, broken off rather abruptly, in the vicinity of Nazareth, by the valleys of Jezreel and Megiddo, better known as the Great Plain of Esdraelon; (2) the mountains of Samaria, at first irregular, with an arm extended toward the sea, forming Mt. Carmel, then rising to heights centering about Bethel; (3) the mountains of Judea which, at an altitude of more than two thousand feet, form a continuation of the central range southward as far as Hebron, beyond which they sink gradually to the level of a plateau; (4) the Negeb, or "Dry Land," the territory of

southern Palestine beginning, roughly speaking, at Beersheba, and extending for fifty miles southward, where it loses itself in the desert; and (5) the Shephelah, or "low-hill" country, lying between the mountains of Judea and the Philistine plain, and distinguishable from the central mountain region by a series of valleys running downward through it toward the sea.[1]

The valley of which the Jordan River is a part, is the most extraordinary phenomenon of its type in the world. In no other part of the earth does the surface of dry land sink to such a depth below the level of the sea. The average depth below sea-level of the Jordan River, from the Lake of Galilee to the Dead Sea, is about one thousand feet, more than twice the depth of the next greatest exposed depression on the earth's surface.[2] To add to the remarkable geological character of this river valley, the waters which feed the Jordan are the melted snow of the highest mountain peak in Syria. This peak is Mt. Hermon, which lifts its head more than nine thousand feet above the level of the sea. Since Hermon is only a little more than one hundred miles from the lower end of the Jordan, it is possible from Jericho, on a clear day, to see its shining snows, even as they melt away into the marshes below and form the tumbling, silt-bearing current of the Jordan, and lose themselves at last, after a fall from a height of two miles from their mountain source, in the salt deposits of the Dead Sea.

The Jordan valley, including the Dead Sea, seems, at one time in its geological history, to have been an extended portion of the Gulf of Akabah, the right arm of the Red Sea. Probably the whole of Palestine, then a level area, as well as the major portion of the Sinaitic Peninsula, was once under water. Following a period during which great beds of limestone were formed upon the ocean floor, there occurred in this region a

[1] The Negeb, whose lower mountain divides run east and west, is all but inaccessible. It lay, in early Bible times, as a dreaded barrier between the desert home of the Hebrews and the land of Canaan.

[2] There are marshes and salt-fields in the Sahara which sink to a depth of almost three hundred feet below sea-level. See Geo. A. Smith, "Historical Geography of the Holy Land," p. 468.

volcanic upheaval which resulted in the formation of the parallel mountain ranges to the west and the east of the Jordan valley. This process was, from all appearances, accompanied by the sudden opening of a fissure in the intervening strata, which rapidly developed into the deep rift as it now appears. A similar formation of a limestone barrier between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akabah then shut out the ocean, while the fresh waters, pouring in from Lebanon and Hermon in the north, filled the rift throughout its remaining length, forming a lake. The Jordan River at present runs its course down the center of that rift.[1]

The Jordan, traced to its full length, consists of three parts. There are first the small streams which form its source and gather in the northern valley as the Waters of Merom. From there the river, gathering strength from small tributaries, rushes down a narrow bed of many cascades to the Lake of Galilee. During this journey of ten miles its tumultuous waters fall from seven feet to about seven hundred feet below sea-level. The Sea of Galilee, sacred for its association with the life and ministry of Jesus, is a beautiful lake eight miles wide and thirteen miles long, now, for the most part, rather bare of life about its shores, but then surrounded by forests and developing cities, and traversed by the boats of many fisherman. Tiberias, Magdala, Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum were cities on or near its western shore; none of them was beyond a day's journey down the hills from Nazareth, the boyhood home of Jesus.

As it leaves the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan courses its way irregularly through the valley, receiving additional reinforcement from the eastern tributaries, the Yarmuk and the Jabbok. The valley is at first narrow, not more than four miles wide; as it reaches the Valley of Jezreel, which is the entrance to the Plain of Esdraelon, it widens to about seven miles. A little farther down, as it approaches the inlet of the Jabbok, the river is once more driven into a narrower course by the protruding hills of Samaria. After that it grows steadily wider, reaching a

[1] See Geo. A. Smith, the "Histor. Geog. of the Holy Land," pp. 469–470.

breadth of about twelve miles at the north shore of the Dead Sea.

The territory east of the Jordan is of the nature of an elevated plateau. Beginning at the foot of Hermon, it extends southward as the continuation of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, maintaining a level of about two thousand feet until, by gradual descent below the land of Moab, it loses itself in the highland plateaus of Arabia.

Three streams cut westward across this plateau, forming fertile but comparatively narrow valleys. The most northerly of these, the Yarmuk, enters the Jordan only a few miles south of the Lake of Galilee. Farther down is the Jabbok, famous in Old Testament history for its association with the life of the patriarch Jacob.[1] In lower Palestine, emptying into the Dead Sea from the lonely plains of Moab, is the river Arnon, generally recognized as the southern political boundary of eastern Palestine.

The region north of the Yarmuk is, in most part, of fertile volcanic soil, with a base of limestone. Its surface is irregular along the Jordan and on the eastern desert slope; the interior, however, is a level and barren plain. This central unwooded tract is called Hauran. The whole region is best known by its most common Old Testament designation as the land of Bashan; in New Testament times it was variously referred to as Gaulanitis, Iturea, or the Trachonitis, and comprised, in the main, the political tetrarchy of Philip.

The territory south of the Yarmuk is entirely of a limestone formation; it is irregularly cut by mountain ridges, and well forested southward beyond the Jabbok, where vegetation gradually begins to diminish until, in the latitude of the lower Jordan, it ceases altogether, and the region becomes a bleak, though imposing plateau. This territory is familiarly known by its Old Testament name of Gilead. It was Israel's most coveted political possession east of the Jordan, and became, from time to time, the scene of decisive battles. In later New Testament times this

[1] See Gen. XXXII: 22.

became the region of the Decapolis and of the Galilean province of Perea.[1]

East of the Dead Sea lies the land of Moab. From its heights, on Mt. Nebo, the Hebrew people were given their first glimpse of the promised land; and somewhere among its overhanging rocks Moses, their great leader, found his unknown sepulcher. The land is traversed by several river valleys which serve as thoroughfares for the warm air from the sub-tropical area of the lower Jordan and the Dead Sea. In the days of the New Testament ancient Moab, especially the region south of the Arnon River, was known as the territory of the Nabateans.

[1] The Decapolis was a league of ten Greek cities formed for the protection of the Greek population against alien, especially Semitic, invasion. The original cities were: Scythopolis, which was situated west of the Jordan, at the entrance to the Plain of Esdraelon; Pella, Dion, Gerasa, and Philadelphia, in the south; Gadara, Raphana, and Kanatha, directly to the east; and Hippos and Damascus in the north,—all of them forming a connecting chain to the eastern desert frontier.

PART II

THE BUILDING OF THE HEBREW NATION

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST BEGINNINGS

I. THE DAWN OF HUMAN HISTORY

THE book of Genesis is, as its name implies, essentially a book of beginnings. Its orderly plan embraces an account of four successive origins: (1) of the world; (2) of man; (3) of races and nations; and (4) of the Hebrew people. The dominant note of the book is clearly sounded in its opening words: "In the beginning God."

As the first in the collection of Biblical writings, Genesis sets an example of the true meaning and purpose of holy scripture: it does not purport to be scientific history, or philosophy, but sacred literature, dealing with the intimate and eternal relationship of God to the world, to human history, and to the individual human soul. It owes its origin and character, not to mere human curiosity, or to pure scientific inquiry, but to spiritually gifted men overpowered by the sense of the presence of God. The intent or aim of the book of Genesis is to teach the greatly needed lesson that the world of nature, the human race, and in a unique sense, the Hebrew people, are God's own personal possessions because they are the work of His own creating and life-giving hand. As has been stated heretofore, Genesis is not the work of a single author, but a literary product of composite historical authorship. It reveals clearly, both in style and content, the individual creative work of three sacred historians who wrote Genesis narratives at dates varying from 850 to 450 B. C.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis form its first division. They are accounts of primeval life. Two parallel stories in them run hand in hand. The creation story, as told by the earlier

prophetic writer, is found in Gen. II: 4b–III: 24. In it man is the first being to be created; then follow trees, herbs, beasts, and birds; finally man's helpmate woman. Man is formed of the dust of the earth, lives in a garden, and is, at first, alone. The story of the creation, as related by the later priestly writer in Gen. I: 1–II: 4a, is a more orderly and dignified account. Picturesqueness and anthropomorphism have given way to sublimity of style, and a later theological outlook. The celestial world, the earth, and man and woman, alike, come into being at the spoken word of God. The earlier writer emphasizes the natural and creative activity of God; the later lays stress upon His universal sovereignty. Both together teach the great and basic truth, confirmed by the fact of religion, that the source of all life, and its only adequate explanation, is God. Man and the universe are God's by the inherent right of creatorship; man is the goal of creation and the divinely-appointed master of his physical environment; God Himself is interested in the well-being of man whom He offers the gift of His own companionship.[1]

The story of how sin came to mar the divine companionship of man, and of how, as a consequence, his earthly lot became one of suffering and sorrow, is, in a literary sense, the continuation of the early prophetic historian's narrative. Again, in contrast to the well-advanced religious ideas of post-Exilic Hebrew history, we have a series of graphic word pictures which convey their own direct and unmistakable meaning. Two scenes are presented, both of them in the natural and vivid style of the dialogue: the one is between the serpent and the woman; the other between the first parents and God. The first depicts the power of evil temptation; the second stresses the reality of divine judgment upon sin. The significance of the story lies in its truthful representation of life. It is not so much primitive

[1] The indebtedness of the Biblical accounts of the creation to the more ancient Babylonian sources, is now quite generally acknowledged. Accepting, in many particulars, the Babylonian conception of the universe, the Biblical historians purged it of its polytheistic elements and lifted it to an exalted ethical plane, infusing into it a spirit of religious insight and devotion which characterizes the Biblical record of the Creation as distinctly original in meaning.

history as an interpretation of universal human experience. Sin is an awful and tragic fact, whose natural cause is a spirit of rebelliousness against God, and whose inevitable consequence is human suffering and sorrow. Yet, the story has a further significance: despite the evils that befall man, he is not forgotten of God; the experiment of creation is not a failure; the struggle of man to survive and overcome is a sign of his certain ultimate victory. The promise is that the seed of the woman shall bruise the heel of the serpent.

The deadly consequences of sin are strikingly depicted in the story of Cain and Abel. It is a story of evil passion precipitating crime and bloodshed, of the cringing and terrorizing fear that forever marks the evil-doer, and, by contrast, of the pitying love and marvelous patience of God. The story clearly reveals its agricultural and pastoral background. This fact points with evidence to the comparatively late date of the earliest of the Genesis histories. There can be little doubt that it reflects the moral and spiritual reaction of a still lingeringly pastoral people against the potent but degrading influences of Canaanitish agricultural worship. It had, therefore, in its own day, the significance of a parable. Its meaning was unmistakably plain: Israel's devotion had once been as the sacrifice of Abel,—wholehearted and pure, as typified by the firstlings of his flock; it was now an offering, not only known to be displeasing to God, but, by reason of this knowledge, leading Israel more and more deeply into sin. However, the tribal mark upon Cain is the guarantee of Israel's future safety as a member of the family of God.

It is of worth to note the Bible historian's interest in the future of Cain. His descendants are not forever to remain fugitives and wanderers. God's purpose for man is that he shall become a civilized creature. He has been placed in the world for a great task: he is to till the soil, to plant vineyards, and to build cities; to establish society, to lay the foundations of government, to cultivate the arts and sciences, and, above all, to build the enduring structure of his own moral character.

The narrative portraying the origin of civilized life centers chiefly about three extremely remote characters, Seth, Lamech,

and Noah. Seth became the ancestor of Enoch, the prototype of the subsequent prophet and saint. Lamech is introduced to account for the origin and development of primitive occupations, arts and sciences. His sons Jabal and Jubal represent the appearance of the shepherd and the shepherd's pipe. Tubal-cain stands for the first sound of hammer and anvil in the forging of copper and iron. Naamah, the sister of Tubal-cain, becomes the personification of feminine virtues. Noah, the most renowned of them all, is introduced as the planter of vineyards, but more particularly by the later historian, as the inaugurator of a new epoch in human history in which the curse that has fallen upon his ancestor is mitigated and later turned into a blessing. Noah's three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth are the traditional progenitors of three notable races or peoples whose character and place in history are clearly outlined by the Biblical writer. The Canaanites, who are in these early chapters identified with the descendants of Ham, have the curse of unending servitude pronounced upon them because of their moral inferiority. The sons of Shem are the Semites who have the promise of becoming a people of power; while those of Japheth—by whom the Biblical writer probably meant the distant peoples surrounding the Mediterranean Sea—are in the course of time to share the sovereignty and prosperity of the Hebrews.

In these early interpretative stories, as in later Hebrew history, the writer's views are determined by his moral ideals. Men and nations are cursed by their own moral insensibility and their undeveloped or distorted conception of God.

The story of the Flood is a record of the first great failure in the course of human civilization. It is one of the most graphic accounts in all Biblical history. Vivid scenes follow one another in rapid succession: man's sin and God's disappointment; Noah the man of righteousness; the ark upon the deepening waters and beneath the lowering heavens; the extinction of all life; the dove bringing back the sprig of olive; and at last the rainbow with its everlasting promise which marks the opening of a new period in the history of mankind.

The Flood story was, from all appearances, one of the most popular stories of early Bible times. Parallels to it are found among the literary remains of a number of early civilizations. That of the Babylonians is the best preserved and most widely known. The actual historical basis for these parallel stories was, it appears, a vast cataclysmic inundation which swept with it a whole civilization in the region of lower Mesopotamia.[1] The Biblical narrative, as it has come down to us, is the composite product of two accounts, the one from the prophetic, the other from the priestly history. The work of the later editorial compiler, who gave to the story its final literary form, is in this case clearly evident. Although the separate portions of the dual account are carefully interwoven, several minor differences of detail, otherwise irreconcilable, appear in the Biblical text. A close reading of Genesis VII–VIII brings to light two such textual discrepancies. 1. According to the earlier prophetic account, the Flood did not continue unabated beyond forty days; according to the later story it lasted more than a year. 2. One writer tells us that Noah took with him into the ark two of each of the animals, a male and a female; the other states that of the animals accounted clean, seven of each were admitted, while of the unclean beasts there was a selection of but two.[2]

Noah's emergence from the ark marks the dawn of a new day. His first act is to express thanksgiving to God. This sacrifice of gratitude does not go unrewarded. A new covenant is established which shall forever assure Noah's descendants of God's merciful care. The seal of His promise is the many-colored rainbow hanging between the stormy heavens and the earth. The story of the Flood teaches (1) the fatal consequences

[1] The historical value of a narrative does not depend solely upon its antiquity. A later account, free from the extravagances of superstition, and from the general atmosphere of extreme primitivity, is often to be preferred for its authenticity to a tradition that has nothing outstanding to commend it but its early date. Literary propriety, historical insight, nobility of spiritual conception, and ethical idealism are proofs of authenticity of a high order regardless of the date of a piece of writing. To have written best is here of greater consequence than to have written first. For lengthy extracts from the Babylonian account of the Flood see C. F. Kent's Historical Bible, Vol. I, pp. 57 ff.

[2] Compare Gen. VII:17 with VII:19–20. Also VI:19 with VII:2.

of moral and spiritual degeneration, and (2) the never-ending mercy and goodness of God.

The purpose of the genealogical tables, which follow the narrative of the Deluge, is to account for a long period of time that intervened between the new beginning of human history and the geographical establishment of the various peoples and nations of the then known world. More specifically their aim is to trace the line of racial descendance from Noah (whose ancestry leads back through Lamech, Enoch, and Seth to Adam) to Abraham the father of the Hebrew people. The story of the tower of Babel furnishes the traditional background for these tables of classification. The building of Babel is probably true history. It seems to have been accomplished at a time when the territory surrounding Babylon was governed as a community of politically united people. The Tower may have been the ancient temple of the Babylonian god Marduk, which by the time of the Hebrew migration into Palestine, had already long lain in ruin.[1] The remains of the great temple made their own impression upon the Semitic peoples who later came to inhabit the land. Thus the traditions of Babel came into Hebrew history. To the Biblical writer, who had himself arrived at a well-developed monotheism, it signified the calamitous failure of a huge but arrogant and idolatrous undertaking.

The gradual divergence of races, which naturally resulted in a multiplication and confusion of tongues, is regarded by the historian as responsible for the origin of languages. The consequent emigration of peoples resulted in the origin of nations.

[1] Mr. P. W. Wilson, writing for a religious journal of a late date, said: "Babel is no longer a myth. Early mankind believed in worship on a mountain. When there was no mountain, they built one. In Ur of the Chaldees, to-day, excavators from the University of Pennsylvania have been uncovering what looked like a huge rubbish heap, but proved to be an immense pyramid temple, similar to what may be seen in Mexico, a staged tower, 195 feet long, 150 feet wide and 60 feet high, standing on an artificial terrace and oriented to the cardinal points of the compass.

"It is what Chaldea meant by Babel. And a work so immense could only have been completed by a community politically united. The Scriptural statement, therefore—that the building was interrupted by a divergence of race and culture—is rendered self-evident."

The outcome of the whole event, the inspired writer believes, was displeasing to God; it violated the divine order of racial unity, and served as a barrier to future human progress.

Of the three sons of Noah, Ham became the ancestor of the group of nations lying toward the South, chiefly those in far-off southern Arabia and in Africa.[1] The children of Shem were the Semites, whose original home was in the East, in northern Arabia, in Mesopotamia, and in the region beyond the Tigris. These include the ancestors of Abraham, the tribal ancestor of the historical Hebrews. The territory of the descendants of Japheth, the third son of Noah, lay in the North, in the regions westward from the shores of the Caspian Sea, across Armenia, Asia Minor, and southern Europe, to the Strait of Gibraltar.

The classification which the Bible writer here gives us is not to be judged in the light of modern ethnological discoveries. It is a simple and trustworthy attempt to account for those early trends in the development of civilized nations which resulted in the origin of the Hebrew race. The point of view is that of a prophetic writer of the ninth century before Christ. His aim is to see in Israel's national history a proof of a providential plan, traceable even to the earliest beginnings of mankind. As a man of heroic faith and high moral purpose for his people, he writes a history which in his own hands is transformed into Scripture.

II. THE HEBREW PATRIARCHS

The twelfth chapter of Genesis marks a new beginning in Biblical history. It focuses the attention of the reader upon the Hebrew race by introducing the characters of the four patriarchs who gave it early historical distinction and renown. A third writer now appears to make his contribution to the composite narrative. He is known as the Elohist historian.[2] Like the

[1] The Canaanites, feared and hated for their morally degrading religious worship, were also included in this group of inferior and servile nations.

[2] This name is given him because of his preferable use of the term "Elohim" to designate God.

Jehovist writer, he is a man of the prophetic school, and regards the history of his people from a moral and providential point of view. He writes judiciously, and his judgments are upon the basis of high ethical standards. While J and E see the patriarchs on the side of their distinctly human qualities, the later priestly writer, P, takes an institutional attitude, centering his narrative about the covenant with Abraham, the promise of the birth of Isaac, the origin and significance of early Palestinian sanctuaries, and the racial distinction between the two prominent groups of Abraham's descendants. The prophetic writers contented themselves with writing stories; the priestly author provides these stories with a literary framework which sets them in order, gives them meaning, and transforms them into actual and authentic history.

Present day interest in these Genesis chapters [1] centers upon the beauty and religious content of their stories. Whether viewed as tribal history, as literary portraiture, or as prophetic sermons, they charm while they do not fail to instruct the reader. The book of Genesis is indeed a work of art. Yet we do not read it for its æsthetic value. A spirit breathes through it which is more than human. Deep calls unto deep in us as we peruse its pages, and the answer of our hearts is that it is God Himself who has spoken.

The chapters from Genesis XII to XXV deal chiefly with the character and career of Abraham. The stories about Sarah, Isaac, and Lot are included in this biographical narrative. The migration of Abraham into the land of Canaan probably took place some time between 1500 and 1400 B. C. The Tell el-Amarna tablets refer to the Habiri who were at this time the menacing invaders of the territory of Palestine. That these Habiri were Arameans from northern Mesopotamia seems almost certain. If they were the Historical Hebrews, the Biblical record is confirmed that the original home of Abraham was Haran, a region in upper Mesopotamia, from which he led a detachment of Hebrew tribes into the promised land. If, however, Abraham was

[1] Chapters XII to L.

an Amorite, as Genesis XV seems to indicate, his original home was Ur. Ur was an ancient Babylonian city about five hundred miles southeast of Haran. His migration into Palestine must then have occurred several centuries earlier. Whether he is to be regarded as a mighty Amorite prince, or an Aramean pilgrim of quiet nomad habits, the character of Abraham is impressively revealed in the decision which prompted him to follow the leadership of the divine spirit and later destined him to become the founder of a new world religion. From our knowledge of the later development of Israel's religious genius it is not difficult for us to imagine Abraham as an extraordinary historical personage, a great religious mystic, who, like Gautama Buddha and Zoroaster centuries later, renounced the world and followed the call of his own soul. His capacity to respond was itself the proof of his supreme greatness. Abraham lived in an age of religious idolatry and moral degeneration. Amid base surroundings he had learned to turn his face heavenward. He became a spiritual adventurer. In the words of a later writer, he sought a city whose builder and maker was God.

The land of Palestine, at the time of Ābraham's arrival, was inhabited by a people whom Hebrew history designates as the Canaanites. Their hostility toward foreign invaders probably prevented him from making a permanent settlement in any portion of the land. He was obliged throughout his lifetime to remain a pilgrim and a sojourner. Protected, however, by the hospitality of the people among whom he had come, he was allowed to move about from place to place unmolested, and to build altars to Jehovah, which were to become the venerated Hebrew shrines of a later day.

To the Hebrew historian, Abraham typifies the genius of his race. He is the hero of faith. His soul contents itself with the assurance of a promised reward. He is only a beginner, and he does not expect to see what he has begun accomplished in a day. He is willing to wait because he knows God will accomplish it in His own time. The stars in the heavens in their tranquil security are the guaranty of a guiding and over-ruling Provi-

dence which will bring his hope to fulfilment. The promise is that, through his son Isaac and his descendants, a great blessing shall come upon mankind. What great comfort succeeding generations of Hebrew people derived from this assurance may readily be inferred. Through him later Biblical writers issued frequent calls to Israel to fulfil its mission by becoming and remaining a people of righteousness and faith. The call, though all too often unheeded, continues even through the pages of the New Testament.

The episode of Abraham's friendly dealing with Lot is an early lesson in magnanimity. It contrasts markedly with the legislative code of an eye for an eye, so currently popular in the day of the prophetic historian. The selfishness of Lot and its fateful consequences are by the Bible writer appropriately associated with the devastated and lifeless region of the Dead Sea. The story of Abraham overtaken by the temptation to offer his son Isaac is of unusual historical importance. It arouses admiration in the reader for the man who by his own individual effort was able to outgrow the limitations of a deep-rooted tribal custom. It argues his true conception of life and of God. Yet it reveals that the great patriarch was after all a child of his time. Religion in him was at first strongly mingled with superstition. The idea of human sacrifice had not yet become repugnant to the slowly-developing religious mind. The story teaches no greater lesson than that Biblical revelation was historically progressive. Abraham lived in an early twilight age; that is why his faith was so greatly needed, and why it was in itself so extraordinary.[1]

[1] Modern archæology has tended to dispel the doubt which for a time existed among Biblical scholars as to the actual historicity of the Hebrew Patriarchs. They were not infrequently regarded as nothing more than "personification of clans, tribes or ethnological groups." Such was the opinion of H. P. Smith. (O. T. Hist., International Theological Library Series). Cornil regards Abraham as a Semitic chieftain, the leader of a migration from Mesopotamia into Palestine about 1500 B. C. Paton believes Abram and Abraham to have been two distinct historical individuals: Abram an Amorite who entered Palestine c. 2200 B. C., and Abraham, supposedly an Aramean of the fifteenth century B. C. Prof. C. F. Kent inclines toward the acceptance of the patriarchs as actual tribal characters; so also G. W. Wade, whose O. T. Hist. has gone through its ninth edition. What archæologists

Genesis XXV–XXXVI records the patriarchal history of Jacob. The stories which center about him differ from those about Abraham. They are marked by a greater degree of realism and a more striking representation of typical racial characteristics; they give evidence of the writer's closer contact with the immediate background of Hebrew history; they show more clearly-recognized signs of the providential character of God's dealings with His people. The story of Rebekah's wooing, which is associated with the Abraham narrative, is of this type. It is a beautiful idyl and a literary masterpiece. As a picture of the simple pastoral life, of love glorified by heroism and self-sacrifice, and of the meaning of the sacred institution of marriage, this story is without a parallel.

The story of Isaac's two sons typifies the prolonged historical conflict between the kindred nations of Israel and Edom. Read from the point of view of the dominant place given by its writer to Jacob, it resolves itself into a series of four portraits: the crafty youth, the lonely fugitive, the repentant and returning exile, and the noble self-sacrificing patriach. Judged by present day standards, such characters as Jacob merit little praise. They were men of gross moral imperfections and are to be judged in the light of their age. They were moral as well as religious pioneers. That the ethical consciousness in them had been awakened, and that there were in them the early strivings toward a moral ideal is clearly shown by the transformation in the character of Jacob. The midnight struggle at Jabbok,[1] so graphically and movingly depicted by the Biblical writer, was evidence of his genuine and large spiritual capacity. It typifies the inevitable moral effect of man's experience of spiritual regeneration.

It is the marvel of the patriarchal narratives that their prophetic writers, judging from the advanced ideals of their own time, were able to deal so frankly and yet so sympathetically with these morally imperfect men. These stories, like those

have recently unearthed in Mesopotamia confirms this view, and makes the patriarchs appear almost unexpectedly as rather well-identified characters.

[1] Gen. XXXII.

of Jesus in the New Testament Gospels, were intended to convey a parabolic meaning. The writers undertook to interpret Israel's character in the light of her historical past. Like Jacob, Israel has been on the mountain top at Bethel; like him, too, she cannot escape the struggle and the testing which await her at Jabbok.

With the narrative of Genesis XXXVII–L, centering upon the patriarch Joseph, the reader is aware that he has entered definitely into authenticated historical channels. The central character becomes vividly real and stands out as an individual without the connotation of a clan or type. The geographical background is not the nomad and pastoral region of Haran or Palestine, but the advanced agricultural civilization of Egypt. Abraham, the princely pioneer, and Jacob, the many-sided adventurer and ultimately chastened saint, make place for Joseph the prophetic dreamer, the sagacious statesman, and the practical man of affairs. For the first time in Biblical history, we seem to be in possession of a narrative record suggestive of modern biography. The historical sources are closer at hand; romance gives way somewhat more to realism; behind the great religious teachings we see a larger body of concrete facts. Joseph in his Hebron home acts like a naturally spoiled child; his sale into Egypt follows as an equally natural consequence. His victory over temptation in Potiphar's house is the outcome of a genuine and noble moral struggle. His governorship of Egypt is attained as the result of tested worth, and the duties of his office are befittingly administered. His attitude toward his brothers is singularly free from the Semitic passion of vindictive pride and personal vengeance. It reveals the influence of life amid civilized surroundings.[1]

The exact time of Israel's sojourn in Egypt is not positively known. However, interesting light has been cast upon this chronological question by modern archæological study. It has

[1] Although archæological research has as yet yielded no exact information leading to the identification of Joseph as a governor of Egypt, there are two references in the Tell el-Amarna tablets—one to a certain Dodu, the other to a Semite of the name of Yanhamu—which warrant the conclusion to which the Biblical account leads. See C. F. Kent, Hist. Bible, Vol. I, p. 149.

been found possible with increasing consistency to place the age of Joseph in the reign of Amenhotep IV, of the eighteenth Egyptian dynasty. If this period is accepted, the date for the migration of Abraham may be fixed at about 1500 B. C., and that of Joseph at close to 1350 B. C. This arrangement not only satisfies the external historical circumstances, but is aptly suited to the religious significance of the events surrounding the Hebrew sojourn in Egypt.[1] Amenhotep IV was a notable religious philosopher and reformer. He was a monotheist. During such a reign as his the Hebrews would be welcome, and the services of Joseph eagerly sought. Once established, they would become a part of the Nile population, and their steady growth in numbers and strength would be assured.

Israel's sojourn in Egypt lasted about 150 years, from 1350 to 1200 B. C.[2] During this century and a half, the Hebrews were learning their first lessons in nation-building. Though gradually enslaved by the Egyptians, who resented their increase in numbers and power, they did not succumb to the burden placed upon them. Instead, they developed a capacity for endurance and a sense of racial unity which in future years were to make them an unconquerable people. Moreover, they preserved their faith in God; and it was this faith with which they were some day to impress and to bless the world.

[1] The earlier period of the Hyksos kings (1680–1580 B. C.), who were Semites and could therefore be counted upon being favorable toward the Hebrews, is the period extensively favored by Biblical scholars. Later scholarship, however, tends toward the acceptance of the period of Amenhotep IV.

[2] Gen. XV:13 and Ex. XII:40 allow four centuries for this period of Egyptian sojourn; Gen. XV:15 and Ex. VI:16–20 suggests that the time was four generations.

CHAPTER VII

THE BIRTH OF THE NATION

I. BIBLICAL SOURCES

THE Biblical sources for this chapter of Old Testament history are the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, and, to a considerable extent, the book of Deuteronomy. These books, like Genesis and the following book of Joshua, are of multiple or composite authorship. The histories of the writers heretofore designated as J, E, and P are incorporated in them. Deuteronomy, from both its literary and religious point of view, belongs to a class and period of its own. Its indebtedness to the life and teachings of Moses, Israel's first great prophet and lawgiver, is undisputed. Its style and content, however, separate it from the remaining histories of the Pentateuch, and place it in a later time in Hebrew history.[1] Historically its background is that of the settled agricultural life of Palestine. The preparatory desert years of Moses and of Israel's early tribal life are long since past. The advanced ethical ideals of the book suggest that it was written during, or immediately following, a period of high prophetic activity in Hebrew history. The conclusion of scholars, after careful study, is that Deuteronomy is a revised prophetic interpretation of the legislative and religious teachings traditionally attributed to Moses, and historically preserved in the combined narrative of the so-called Jehovist and Elohist writers. The time which best suits the conditions suggested by its internal evidence, is the reactionary period of the reign of Manasseh, king of Judah, which lasted from 686 to 639 B. C. It is the consensus of opinion that Deuteronomy is to

[1] The original nucleus of Deut. comprised the chapters XII–XIX. The Deut. writer based his revision of the Mosaic legislation upon the versions of J and E, which had by his time—about 650 B. C.—been combined into one book.

GREAT SEA
(MEDITERRANEAN)
CANAAN
ARABIA
MOAB
LAND OF RAM
MIZRAIM
EGYPT
Rosetta
Daphnae (Pahpanhes)
Succoth
Pithom (Massuhot)
Bitter Lakes
Shur
Goshen
Rameses
On
CAIRO
Babylon
Memphis
Pyramids
L. Moeris
Suez
Moses Well
Marah
Elim
Encampment by Red Sea
Wilderness of Paran
Wilderness of Zin
Kadesh-Barnea
(Sinai)
Mt. HOR
Petra
Hormah
Tophet
AMALEKITES
AMALEKITES?
Mount SEIR
LAND OF EDOM
Arabian Desert
Gaza
PHILISTINES
Lachish
Beersheba
Hebron
Jericho
Jericho
Jerusalem
Bethel
JEBUSITES
Heshbon
Mt. Nebo
Dibon
Dead Sea
Kir Moab
Zoar
Ezion-geber
Hazeroth
Elath
Gulf of Aqabah
Dophkah
Alush
Rephidim
Horeb
Mt. Sinai?
Wilderness of Sinai
Mt. Serbal
Wilderness of Shur
Gulf of Suez
RED SEA
Tell el Amarna
EGYPT AND THE DESERT
1200 - 1150 B.C.
Battenhouse & Leitzel

be identified with the notable Book of the Law discovered in the temple at Jerusalem by Hilkiah, the priest, in 621 B. C. The religious reformation which followed during the reign of king Josiah verifies this conclusion.[1]

The contents of Exodus-Deuteronomy may be summed up in two words: history and law. Exodus and Numbers contain the larger historical portions; Leviticus and Deuteronomy are legislative, the one setting forth the view of the priest, the other containing the message of a prophet. The Biblical sources of this period may, accordingly, be divided into four parts: (1) Exodus I to XVIII, dealing with Israel's exodus and journey to Sinai; (2) Exodus XIX to Numbers X, which relates the incidents surrounding the giving of the Law; (3) Numbers X–XXII, which is a record of the journeyings from Sinai to the plains of Moab in the east-Jordan territory of Palestine; (4) Numbers XXII to XXXVI, which completes the historical narrative and furnishes the geographical background for the three legislative-prophetic discourses in the book of Deuteronomy.

II. THE EXODUS

The Biblical account of the Hebrew exodus rests on a firm historical foundation. No event in Old Testament history is more consistently assumed; and none is by its writers believed to have been of greater national and religious significance. The story, moreover, has been sufficiently corroborated by archæological study. True, there is the admission that, up to the present time, no direct reference to the Exodus has been found among the Egyptian inscriptions. Such silence causes no surprise; it is the expected silence of a proud and contemptuous people regard-

[1] The recurrent use, e. g., of such phrases as "beyond Jordan," indicate that the writer, or writers, lived in Western Palestine. Certain items of Hebrew legislation, notably that pertaining to the centralization of worship at Jerusalem, reflect a period not earlier than that of Solomon. Chap. XXXVI, which is an account of the death and burial of Moses, and is one in spirit and style with the foregoing chapters, is further substantiation of the view that Deuteronomy is the work of a late pre-Exilic writer, or group of writers, who drew upon the historical and legislative source of materials then at hand.

ing an event of humiliating circumstance. The escape, moreover, of a rebellious and rather undesirable tribe of runaway slaves must have been considered an occurrence of little moment in Egypt's history. Recent excavations at Rameses and Pithom, places to which Biblical reference is made in Exodus I: 11, verify the scriptural account. These ancient cities contained the storehouses built by the Hebrews for Rameses II in the land of Goshen, a small territory on the eastern Delta of the Nile. Rameses was the first to convert this district of Egypt from an open pastoral land into a colony of gardens and homes. His reign extended for sixty years, from 1292 to 1225 B. C. Giant statues and hieroglyphic inscriptions, which have been discovered and are still to be seen at Luxor and Karnak, show how great was his power, how arrogant his spirit toward all foreign and enslaved people, and how well he fits into Hebrew history in the rôle of the Pharaoh of the oppression.

There came a time, however, when his political strength began to wane. During the later years of his rule trouble arose in the East. An ancient people, called the Kassites, had set foot in Babylonia and were threatening Egypt's supremacy in the territory between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. After Rameses' death the storm of rebellion arose. Invaders entered Egypt from both the east and the west. The strength of the Pharaohs declined, and the renowned nineteenth dynasty came to an inglorious end. It was probably during the reign of Merneptah, one of the sons of Rameses, that the conditions were found to be favorable for the rebellion and subsequent flight of the Hebrews.

The man whom God had prepared to be the leader for this time of crises was Moses. No more illustrious name adorns the pages of early history. Like Washington, he was the father of his nation. But he was more: judged by his influence upon future generations, he stands out as the greatest spiritual light in the history of antiquity. Moses' preparation for his task was unique. None but a man divinely commissioned, and of extraordinary talent and training, could have dared to undertake so great an adventure. Moses was God-taught and God-sent. He

heard the voice of Jehovah in the agonizing cry of his people. Thus he became Israel's saviour as well as the nation's founder.

The life of Moses may be divided into three distinct periods: (1) his first years of preparation as an adopted prince in the royal court of Egypt; (2) his continued preparation as a chief shepherd for Jethro, the priest and chieftain of the desert-dwelling Midianites; (3) the period of his great life work of leadership, spent, for the most part, in the vicinity of Horeb-Sinai, the mountain of Jehovah's presence and of the giving of the sacred Law. The length of each of these periods was forty years. Moses thus began his great career in the full maturity of all his natural and spiritual powers. His qualifications were those of one who had passed through the school, both of culture and of consecration.

Two experiences stand out as the background of Moses' call. The first came as an awakening in him of the sense of kinship or brotherhood. It was the call of blood, and Moses answered it by the shedding of blood. Judged by Christian standards, his slaying of the brutal Egyptian taskmaster was a criminal act; the tribal morality into which he had been initiated, however, imposed upon him the obligatory task of being the avenger of his kinsman's blood. Nevertheless, it is difficult to believe that Moses was content with the part he took in this tragic episode. Destined to the life of a fugitive, he found his way into the Midianite desert. It was there that the second and great experience came to him which resulted in his divine call. The Midianites, under Jethro's chieftaincy, were a people of close kinship to the Hebrews.[1] They were the descendants of Keturah, Abraham's later wife, as the Israelites were the descendants of Sarah, the Ishmaelites of Hagar, and the Edomites of Esau.

The Biblical account of the religious revelation which came to Moses during his forty years of sojourn with Jethro is not sufficiently detailed and clear to warrant absolute inferences. According to the later prophetic historian, and the priestly writer who followed him after four intervening centuries, the

[1] One of the prophetic historians calls these people the Kenites; the other the Midianites.

term Jehovah, as a name for the God of the Israelites, was unknown among the Hebrews until the time of Moses.[1] The conclusion, accordingly, upon the basis of this record is that this name, by which God was already known among the Kenites, represents a completely new element introduced into Israel's religion following Moses' return from the desert. On the other hand, the earlier prophetic writer, J, indicates, by his use of the term Jehovah in the first portion of the book of Genesis, that the name was familiar to him. It is assumed, on this ground, that J, as a native of Judah, or southern Palestine, had come into possession of the name from the Kenites, whose territory lay adjacent to Palestine on the south.[2] The difficulty with this view is that it makes Moses the prophet of a religion essentially foreign to his own people. Assuming this to have been the case, there remains the further difficulty of explaining the unhesitating patriotic response of these slave tribes to their newly-risen leader.

A more satisfactory interpretation offers itself in the assumption that the revelation which came to Moses in the land of Midian was that Jehovah, whom Jethro and his people worshiped, had been the God of Abraham, and was therefore, in reality, the God of his own race. His commission, accordingly, was to go to his enslaved kinsmen in Egypt, tell them of his discovery, rally them to the worship of Jehovah, inspire them with a passion for independence, and take them to the desert region of Sinai where they were to receive the training necessary to make them a nation.

Whatever may have been the occasion, the call of God was unmistakable. And it was as irresistible as had once been the call of blood. This time, however, there was no impetuous response; the passion of youth had given place to deliberation and hesitancy. The voice from the flaming bush was needed to awaken Moses to a full realization of the commanding presence of Jehovah. Such is one writer's version of Moses' call; the other

[1] For the account of E see Ex. III:13–14; for that of P see Ex. VI:3.

[2] The historian E, who lived a century later, was a resident of the Northern Hebrew kingdom.

is that it was only when he had led away his flock, and had returned alone to Horeb, the mountain of Jehovah, that the assurance of his divine commission came to him. Even then he coveted, as a mark of certainty, a sign which, according to the Jehovist historian, was given him in the incident of the staff suddenly transformed into a serpent.[1]

The story of the Exodus deals with one of the most significant events in Hebrew annals. It marks Israel's entrance into the family of the world's great nations. It opens a new epoch in human history. Moses' appeal to Pharaoh, Israel's increased burden of slavery, the visitation of the plagues, the resistant hardness of Pharaoh's heart, the death of Egypt's firstborn, the hurried observance of the Passover, the flight before the Egyptian army, the crossing of the Red Sea and the journey into the desert wilderness—these are the episodes which, following one another in rapid succession, make up the body of the narrative.

The plagues which befell Egypt are enumerated by both the prophetic and the priestly writer. With the former the emphasis is upon their providential character as natural phenomena; with the latter it is upon their miraculous and supernatural origin. Making allowance for duplicate accounts, we find they are seven in number: the discolored and poisoned waters of the Nile; the swarms of frogs which infest the surrounding region; the swarms of gadflies and gnats which are bred in the deposited silt and spread disease among men and beasts; the murrain or pestilence which breaks out among the cattle and threatens the food supply of adults and children; the hailstorm which destroys the already withering crops; the swarms of locusts which devour what remains following the hail, and finally the pestilence which breaks out among the people themselves, sparing none and sweeping with it the flower of the home. The Hebrews, living in Goshen out of immediate contact with the Egyptians, were temporarily safe from its deadly ravages.

[1] According to the Elohist historian, the sign was contained in the words: "I AM hath sent me to you." The priestly historian identifies the sign with the promise of Jehovah that He Himself will harden Pharaoh's heart, in order that all Israel may know His power and purpose in setting His people free.

Moses saw in these terrorizing events a providential opportunity. Pharaoh, intermittently hardened and relenting, is an example of human helplessness in the face of fateful forces. All power is taken from him; according to the record of Scripture, even that of hardening his own heart. Everything is in God's hands. Israel is to be delivered by a strength not her own, in order that she, too, may henceforth be kept humble by a remembrance of the goodness and mercy of Jehovah.

The Passover, which was to be Israel's perpetual reminder of her miraculous deliverance from slavery and of her birth as a nation, was not a new institution. It appears to have had a long previous Semitic history. Originally it was a tribal festival coming in the spring of the year; its occasion was the celebration of the successful barley harvest. Later history, however, invested it with a new and graver significance. The sacrificial lamb, once slain and its flesh eaten amid feasting and rejoicing, became a token of the suffering from which the Hebrew people had been freed by the gracious intervention of Jehovah. Thus gradually it became the symbol of vicarious suffering, until, in New Testament times, Jesus himself came to be portrayed as the Lamb of God. The supreme significance of this sacred symbolism is that man's redemption from bondage to spiritual freedom is a divine work, the result of a personal and sacrificial act of God.

So hurriedly, at the critical hour, did the Hebrews break camp for their journey into the desert that the last meal which the women found time to prepare was one of small cakes of unleavened bread. Later remembrance of this incident, too, clothed it with a sacred symbolism. These cakes were like the bitter years of Israel's Egyptian bondage. When, as time passed, the Feast of the Unleavened Bread came to be closely associated with the Feast of the Passover, the two festivals together came to have a dual significance to Hebrew historians. They recalled to vivid memory two facts surrounding Israel's national origin: the one was that it was humble; the other that it was Providential.

The culminating incident of the Exodus was the crossing of the Red Sea. That this was accomplished miraculously, is a mat-

ter of clear history. The record furnishes us with the facts in triplicate narrative. There is no better example of the composite historical authorship of the early books of the Old Testament than that with which we are here presented. The difference between the prophetic and the priestly accounts is again clearly noticeable. It is God who delivers Israel: upon this fact there is absolute unanimity of agreement and of record. Israel sees in what is happening a manifestation of His glory. In their interpretation of the miracle, however, writers reveal their own characteristic attitudes: the earliest historian, attributing the dividing of the waters to a strong east wind, regards the miracle as providential; the later authors, emphasizing the unmistakable evidence of divine transcendence and authority, view it as a supernatural intervention.[1] Both interpretations are correct. The choice between them depends upon the experience and temperament of the individual reader. One is highly poetical; the other is pure and simple prose. Both tell the story and teach the lesson that Israel was God's people, and that, having chosen them for a great purpose, His overshadowing presence was henceforth to be their solace and inspiration.

III. LIFE IN THE DESERT

The route which the Hebrews took in making their escape from bondage is not certainly known. Of the three accounts which we have of the Exodus, one is fragmentary;[2] the other two are sufficiently complete, but convey different impressions of Israel's itinerary following the crossing of the Red Sea. Traditional history since the sixth century A. D. has favored the southern route, which lay along the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez, and led down to the modern Jebel Musa, or mountain of Moses, almost at the extreme end of the Sinaitic peninsula. If this view be accepted, Jebel Musa is the Mt. Sinai of Scripture, the place of Israel's encampment preparatory to the giving of the Law. From there, it is, accordingly, to be assumed, the

[1] The two main accounts are intermingled in Chap. XIV.

[2] The incomplete narrative is that of the northern prophetic historian E.

Hebrew refugees journeyed northward along the Gulf of Akabah to Elath, which bordered on the land of the Midianites where for the first time they could feel secure against pursuit by the Egyptians. Upon leaving Elath, they moved northward, entered the wilderness of Paran, and settled, for a period of time, at Kadesh directly fifty miles south of Beersheba. After a vain attempt at entering Palestine—or the land of Canaan as it was then called—from the south, they were obliged to spend a period of "wandering" in the wilderness surrounding the general locality of Kadesh Barnea.[1]

Recent Biblical and archæological research has tended to alter somewhat the early tradition regarding Israel's desert itinerary and the exact location of Mt. Sinai, the holy mountain of Hebrew legislation. Trustworthy evidence favors the opinion that Sinai was located on the borderland of Midian, in the region of Mt. Seir, to which reference is made in Judges V: 4 and Deuteronomy XXXIII: 2. The chief reasons for an acceptance of this view are these: (1) that the region of Mt. Seir is on the line of the most direct route eastward into the land where Moses had spent forty years of his preparation for his life work and where he had received the call to come to the rescue of his own people; (2) that this route directly eastward from the land of their captivity was the most natural way of escape for the Hebrews from the pursuit and circumvention of the Egyptians; (3) that the points marking the traditional journey would have led the Israelites directly into the way of the especially garrisoned Egyptian copper and turquoise mines along the eastern coast of the Gulf of Suez; (4) that Israel's subsequent interest in Mt. Sinai and the occasional journeys thither by the early prophets favor this location.[2]

[1] During this desert period, which lasted throughout an entire generation, the Hebrew tribes once, at least, came into an encounter with the Egyptians. Professor Sayce, in his Early History of the Hebrews, p. 159, makes reference to the inscription of Merneptah which bears record to an Egyptian expedition into Palestine, in connection with which the "Israelites are spoiled so that they have no seed, and the land of Khar (Edom) is become like the widows of Egypt."

[2] I Kings XIX:3–8 records the flight of Elijah from Mt. Carmel, in Palestine, to Horeb-Sinai, the mountain of the Law, where he sought refuge and inspiration. If such journeys were at all customary in the days of the prophets, they point to a

The desert life of the Hebrew people was marked by the following successive stages: the journey to Sinai; the giving of the Law; an unsuccessful attempt at a southern invasion of Palestine; a lapse into nomad life in the region surrounding Kadesh-Barnea, and a final occupation of the pastoral table-lands of the Amorite country east of the Jordan River. The repeated instances of petty or open rebellion, proof of their lack of faith in themselves and their leader, the willing dependence of the people upon the providential appearance of the quails and the manna, the report of the spies, the bitter struggle of the Israelites with the plundering Amalekites who occupied the desert south of Judah, the worship of the golden calf, the episode of the wilderness serpent, and the continued and detailed legislation against crude forms of evil and injustice—these are events of minor historical significance, though they reveal unmistakably the essential unfitness of a newly-freed slave people for the privileges and responsibilities of national government.[1]

The year at Sinai was signalized by two important occurrences. The first was the solemn ceremony in which, under guidance of Moses, the people openly pledged their spiritual allegiance to Jehovah. This pledge took the form of an oath or covenant familiar to the tribal life of ancient times. It was known as the covenant of blood. Instead, however, of the intermingling of blood—usually effected through contact by a small open wound in the skin, and symbolical of the most intimate kinship between the contracting persons—an orderly ritual of sacrifice was substituted, in which the blood of a slain animal

place nearer to Palestine than the traditional site at the extreme southern end of the peninsula.

[1] According to Josephus (Antiq. III:1–5) quails were to be found in large abundance along the coast of Arabia. The manna, which was provided for the daily nourishment of the Israelites, was either a white sweet-tasting wax-like substance which was to be found exuding from the bark of the tamarisk tree, or, what appears more likely, a tender lichen which gathered on stones, dried, and could be ground into a coarse meal for bread. It is not necessary to suppose that the Hebrews, during this period, sustained themselves wholly upon food thus secured. Though nomads, they had with them herds of cattle, goats, and sheep, which furnished them with a certain amount of food and clothing, and supplied the needs for the daily tabernacle service.

was sprinkled upon both the sacred altar and the waiting congregation.[1] Translated into terms readily understood by all participants, this covenant meant a promise of loyalty to Jehovah as the God of their forefathers. By implication it was likewise a bond of brotherhood which served as a basis of interpreting religion in terms of the moral life. Life in all of its aspects was thereby made sacred. It was to be regarded as a trust from God. Immediate kinship with Jehovah made Israel's task one of unquestioning obedience. Jehovah Himself was king: Israel's responsibility was direct, inescapable, and moral. The theocratic government thus established by Moses, and later developed by the Hebrew prophets, formed the basis of the New Testament conception of the kingdom of God—a conception which, after centuries of struggle, is gradually finding expression in our modern ideal of a Christian democracy.

The second event at Sinai was the giving of the Law. It grew gradually out of the covenant from which it derived its religious and social significance. The origin of the Decalogue presents an interesting problem of Biblical study. An archæological acquaintance with the legislative codes of ancient Babylonia reveals the fact that certain laws, similar to those of the Old Testament Decalogue, were in existence in the region of lower Mesopotamia as early as 1900 B. C., seven centuries before Moses.[2] The great Hebrew law-giver was thus in the direct line of succession to the mightiest spiritual geniuses of antiquity. The teachers and leaders of Israel who followed him in turn became his debtors; but they, too, have had a part in giving added form and content to the sacred Hebrew law.

A close reading of Exodus-Deuteronomy reveals three distinct versions of the Hebrew Decalogue. The oldest of these is found in Exodus XXXIV. It is generally known as the ritual or ceremonial code. Its emphasis upon festivals and sacrifices relates it very naturally to the incident of Israel's solemn cove-

[1] See Exodus XXIV:6–8.

[2] The indebtedness of Moses to Hammurabi is beyond dispute. Abraham's early home and ancestry clearly suggest this. The greatness of Moses does not lie in his literary originality, but in his unparalleled moral and spiritual conception of God. To Moses belongs the glory of having spoken best rather than first.

nant at Sinai. Socially its background is that of the semi-nomadic tribal life of the Hebrew people as they lived in the region of Kadesh-Barnea. Duties in it are predominantly those of the group; religion is pre-eminently worship. The version found in Exodus XX is of a loftier ethical character. It is the one most intimately associated with the life of Moses and with Israel's sojourn at Horeb-Sinai. This code of the law, known also as the ethical or prophetic Decalogue, stresses individual responsibility; its emphasis is less ceremonial than moral. The third version is found recorded in Deuteronomy V. It is a parallel version to Exodus XX, but differs from it in minor textual details. The Deuteronomic code fits very naturally into the later pre-Exilic period of Hebrew history, which is the period now generally assigned to the whole book.

Intimately associated with the covenant at Sinai and the giving of the Law was the building of the sacred tabernacle which contained the Ark of the Covenant. The ark, representing the special presence of Jehovah, found its usual resting place in the sacred tent to which, on occasions of peculiar crises, the people resorted for consultation with the oracle of God. It served likewise as the place from which, as the occasion demanded, Moses taught the people and received from them their personal petitions and their renewed pledges of spiritual allegiance. The importance of the tent meeting in the religious life of the Hebrews during the period of their sojourn in the desert was presented in a somewhat magnified form by the post-Exilic priestly writer. By contrast, the prophetic writers make only a brief mention of it in their otherwise elaborate narrative. However modest or imposing in outward construction, its real significance was that it served, at a critical time in Israel's tribal history, as a symbolical representation of the sacred and yet accessible presence of the living God.

Life in the desert was for the Hebrews severely simple, necessarily hard, and fraught with frequent danger. Its contrast with their settled, though slavish, existence in Egypt was a severe but necessary test. The dreariness of the desert, with its fear of thirst and starvation, was ever upon them. Through it

Israel was to learn reliance upon God. Then there was the even greater dread of contact with hostile surrounding tribes, plundering Bedouins, whose habit it was to make unexpected nightly appearances, slaying the men and carrying off the women and children into the terrors of slavery. The struggle to survive led to watchfulness and economy; it led likewise to the social organization necessary to the establishment of the later Hebrew state. Organization, in turn, encouraged conquest, and conquest necessitated war. The battle with the Amalekites, who roamed about the arid rolling territory between Beersheba and Kadesh, served as a striking instance for testing Israel's power of self-defense. The battle was fought either for the possession of the rich oasis of Kadesh-Barnea, or as a preliminary attempt at gaining a foothold in southern Palestine. Though victorious, the Hebrews appear not to have been encouraged to further aggressive activity against the Amalekites; they seem, on the contrary, to have feared them and to have chosen to put off the dreaded conflict as long as possible, contenting themselves, meanwhile, with their secure hold on Kadesh and with the promise that Jehovah would reckon personally with Amalek by foredooming him to a life of endless warfare.[1]

That a later attempt actually was made by the Hebrews to enter Palestine from the south is clearly suggested by the story of the spies who were sent by Moses to bring a report of the condition of the land and of the type of people by whom it was inhabited. They set out from the Israelite headquarters at Kadesh. Their investigation of Palestine must have been thorough; it seems to have taken them as far north as the later territory of the tribe of Dan. These spies were unanimous in their appraisal of Canaan's fruitfulness and wealth. It was Caleb alone, however, who counseled an immediate advance into the country; the remainder remembered only its giant inhabitants and walled cities and advised delay. We discover in this incident the actual reason for the prolonged desert sojourn of the Hebrews. It was their unpreparedness for the military task of occupying the land. The Canaanites, a Semitic people who

[1] See Exodus XVII:3–16.

had by centuries preceded the Hebrews in their migration westward from Arabia, had strongly entrenched themselves in Palestine and were in the process of building up a fairly advanced civilization.[1] To dispossess them of their territory seemed for the time impossible. When, a generation later, they were overcome, it was by assimilation quite as much as by extermination. The story of the spies unquestionably points to an early Calebite migration into southern Palestine. The descendants of Caleb later became a constituent of the southern tribe of Judah. Their settlement in Canaan was thus peaceful, and not by means of war, as was that of the remaining Hebrew tribes who came afterward to occupy central and northern Palestine.[2]

Slowly but resolutely the desert did its work. The old generation of slaves disappeared, and in its place there arose the freemen of the wilderness. Youth, hardihood, and the spirit of adventure were theirs; and with these new powers there came the age-old desire for conquest. The land of promise was to become Israel's possession by the then undisputed right of the power to conquer and to hold. The natural gateway to Palestine from the desert region was the valley of Arabah. This valley extended northward from the Gulf of Akabah to the Dead Sea. It skirted the borderland of the kindred tribes of Edom and Moab, and led to an elevated plain overlooking the Jordan valley and the Palestinian hills to the west. It was to this plain that Israel's leaders, accompanied by their developing armies, directed their footsteps. Believing the Edomites and Moabites to be friendly, Moses sent messengers to secure a safe passport through their territory. The strength of the former was revealed by their flat refusal; the comparative weakness of the latter by their fear of the approaching Hebrews. The story of Balaam, of which there are two accounts, is evidence of the

[1] Israel's later pride, and the remembrance of her past struggles, led the Bible writers to a denial of their kinship with the Canaanites. According to the genealogies they were regarded as descendants, not of Shem, but of Ham.

[2] Does this difference in the time and method of entrance into Canaan furnish us with a clue to the barrier between northern and southern Israel in later years? It seems so. It must have led also to the preferment of Judah as the home of the national capital, and, in after years, to its glorification as the more favored people and territory.

rapidly developing strength of the Israelites. Moab's fear inspired them with self-confidence. For the first time in their national history they became conscious of their power. It was a great historical moment. How beautiful and full of significance it seemed to the historian of later years is suggested in the exquisite poetry of Balaam's oracle.[1]

The conquest of the east-Jordan territory was the first decisive step in the building of the Hebrew nation. It gave Israel a place among the rising tribal powers of the eastern Mediterranean. The entire region northward from the river Arnon lay then in the hands of the Amorites. It fell naturally into two parts: that between the Arnon and the Jabbok which was under the rule of king Sihon; and the territory upward from the Jabbok to the foothills of Mt. Hermon which was governed by king Og. Upon the approach of the Hebrews, the Amorites offered strong resistance. A fierce battle ensued in which Israel gained the mastery. Heshbon, the Amorite capital, thereafter became the base for extended military operations. Gilead and Bashan, when they had yielded to complete conquest, became the first settling place of the Hebrews. Here, upon its plateaus east of the upper Jordan, life for them underwent its next significant change: they were transformed from a nomad and pastoral race to an agricultural people. Fields of grain appeared by the side of rich pastures for their flocks. Homes were established; settlements grew into communities; the camp slowly gave place to the village. Expressed in later current Biblical symbolism, the seed of Israel had at last taken root in Palestinian soil. Before long it was to be transplanted to the coveted region beyond the Jordan. With that event another epoch began in Hebrew history. It opened with a period of uninterrupted and bitter warfare which at length resulted in the conquest and colonization of Canaan. The leader for this new era was Joshua, a fearless and sagacious man of war. Moses, the teacher, the prophet, and legislator found that his work was completed. With the deliverance of his charge to his successor and a farewell message to his people, he disappears from the historical

[1] See Numbers XXIV:5–9.

scene. Nothing could have been more appropriate than that the man whose career had begun at Horeb should end at Pisgah. Obedience, supported by faith, had at last for him been transformed into a clear vision and a full realization. The grandeur of Moses' life is aptly reflected in the account of his death. Alone, and with the hand of God upon him, he sought his sepulcher in the mountains of Moab. Somewhere there, hidden from human eyes,

"The angels of God upturned the sod,"

and he found his grave among those who, to use the words of a later prophet, had poured out their souls unto death, who had seen the travail of their souls and were satisfied.[1]

Moses occupies a unique place in Hebrew history. His name not only stands at the beginning of Israel's historical career; it is engraved in the record of its whole subsequent religious life. He was, humanly speaking, the creator both of the Hebrew nation and of Hebrew religion. He became Israel's first teacher, lawgiver, and prophet.

Three pictures come to the foreground in our retrospect of the period of Israel's national origin. The first is the picture of Horeb-Sinai, majestic, storm-swept, and inhabited of God. From it God spoke to His people; among its crags, surrounded by clouds surcharged with fiery lightning, Moses heard His voice and received the revelation of His will. At its base stood the ordered tents of Israel, from which the people beheld the transfigured countenance of their leader as he reappeared among them fresh and strong with the remembrance of his fellowship with God. Here Israel received its law and the ordinances of its sacred ritual; and here it was that Jehovah chose to dwell even for many years after the settlement of the Hebrews in Palestine. Though scarcely, if at all, visible from any part of Palestine, Mt. Sinai was nearer in imagination and dearer to the heart of the people than snow-capped Hermon to the north, or Carmel by the side of the Great Sea. It was the mountain of historical promise and of future hope; it stood as the symbol of

[1] Is. LIII:11–12.

God's presence and power, of His grace and goodness and of His providential never-ending care.

The second picture is that of a great historical people passing out of slavery into freedom. It is a drama of a mighty social and religious transformation enacted before the reader's eyes. Its scenes make clear how slow was the process and how very nearly insuperable were the obstacles in the pathway which led the Hebrew people to their ultimate goal of statehood.

Finally, as we look again upon this past period, we see the portrait of a man. At its heart Biblical history is a collection of incomparable biographies. That of Moses stands out among the best. Behind the Law, which was his great gift to future humanity, was his noble religious and moral character. His indebtedness to the religious leadership and reform of a remote past is now known.[1] There is nothing in the scriptural account to show that this fact has ever been denied. It is in his personality that he stands supreme. At its basis was his lofty conception of God, his loyalty to his people, his noble and hopeful outlook upon life, his devotion to the full measure of revealed truth, his consciousness of a divine power ruling over nature and over the destiny of his race, his idealism, his patience, his humility, his courage, and his genius for mystical fellowship with God. Despite the limitations of his age, Moses was a marvelous man. The history of religion accords him the place of highest honor among the world's first prophets.

[1] See index on the legislative code of Hammurabi.

THE HEBREW SETTLEMENT
OF
CANAAN
1150 - 1050 B.C.
THE GREAT SEA
PHOENICIANS
Sidon
Tyre
Achzib
Accho
Dor
Jappa
Ashdod
Askelon
Gaza
PHILISTINES
AMALEKITES
ISHMAELITES
Rehobath
SIMEON
Beershaba
CALEBITES
KENITES
JERAHMEELITES
EDOMITES
JUDAH
Jekoa
Hebron
Lachish
Debir
Ziph
En-gedi
Gath
Bethlehem
Jerusalem
Gilgal
Jericho
Gibeon
Gezer
Timnath
Ajalon
Beth-horon
Shaalbim
Ramah
Bethel
Shiloh
Ophran
Mt Ebal
Shechem
Mt Gerizim
EPHRAIM
Tibleam
Dothan
Taanach
Megiddo
Nahalal
Mt Tabor
Plain of Esdraelon
Jezreel
Mt Gilboa
Bath-shean
ISSACHAR
ZEBULUN
NAPHTALI
ASHER
Kedesh
Hazor
Waters of Merom
Beth-rehob
Dan
DAN
Mt Lebanon
Mt Hermon
Damascus
HITTITES
MAACAH
ARAMEANS
BASHAN
Sea of Chinnereth
Aphek
R. Yarmuk
MACHIR
GILEAD
CANAANITES
MANASSEH
R. Jordan
Penuel
Succoth
Jabbok
GAD
AMMONITES
Rabboth Ammon
Heshbon
REUBEN
SALT SEA
MOAB
Kir Moab
DESERT OF ARABIA
Intrel & Battenhouse

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONQUEST AND COLONIZATION OF PALESTINE

With this chapter we enter upon our study of the colonial period in Hebrew history. To characterize the period would be to say that it was one of extreme hardship, of prolonged warfare, of contact with deteriorating moral influences, of a perceptible return to religious primitivity, of heroism, of continued training in self-government, of a developing nationalistic patriotism, and, above all, of a gradual settling down to homemaking, to community organization, and to life in a land which was thereafter forever to be known as Israel's historical possession. The time required for the conquest and colonization of Palestine was approximately a century, from 1150 to 1050 B. C.

I. THE HISTORY OF THE CONQUEST

The story of the early colonial life of the Hebrews is presented to us in two vivid parallel accounts. The two narratives are quite independent of each other, and accordingly furnish us with much valuable information regarding the period. The book of Joshua forms a natural continuation of Israel's history following the death of Moses. Its point of view is that of the Deuteronomic historian, who gives us a somewhat idealized account of Israel's entrance into and settlement in Canaan. The first twelve chapters of the book relate to us, in a greatly condensed and somewhat colorful manner, the successes of Joshua in the capture of Jericho and Ai, the subjugation of the confederacy of kings in the south, and the signal and decisive victory, by the waters of Merom, over the coalition of kings in the north. These chapters are based upon the earlier prophetic histories J and E. The remaining twelve chapters are of an altogether dif-

ferent composition and design, and are the work of the priestly historian. Taken together, however, the two divisions of the book of Joshua agree with respect to the general conception they give the reader concerning the nature of the Conquest: (1) that it was national and not tribal; (2) that it was accomplished in a short period of not more than ten years; (3) that it occurred through military aggression, and not by means of social amalgamation; and (4) that it was territorially complete, including the whole of Palestine. The writer, standing at the point of his clearer perspective, was less concerned with individual detailed events than with the religious zeal and devotion which characterized the leadership of the conquest, and the providential presence of Jehovah to whom the whole vast undertaking owed its meaning and success. The conviction that God was with the Hebrew people in this critical and decisive period of its history inspired them for their literary task, even as it had been the sole inspiration of Joshua himself and of the succeeding heroes of old.

The book of Judges, whose literary framework likewise accords with the plan and purpose of the Deuteronomic writer, reflects conditions which lead to another conclusion with regard to the actual nature of the Hebrew Conquest. Chapters II–XVI, which comprise the main section of the book, contain stories of tribal heroes who appeared in times of periodic crises, in order to bring deliverance to the Hebrew people, whose safety or very existence was endangered by the aggressiveness of neighboring alien peoples. These hostile neighbors, we are informed, lived, for the most part, in well-fortified cities which guarded the main entrances to the fertile plains and the leading caravan routes of the land. Chiefly they were in the larger river valleys, on the broad interior of the plain of Esdraelon, and on the fertile territory of the Mediterranean seaboard. In addition there were those who had entrenched themselves in strongly-fortified mountain cities, both in northern and in southern Palestine. A number of these, it will be noticed, were famous Hebrew sanctuaries of bygone patriarchal days,—such as Hebron, Gibeon, Bethel, Shiloh, Ramah, and Schechem—

places already associated with early Old Testament history. These Canaanite cities were a constant menace to an attainment of tribal unity among the Israelites. By means of them the Hebrew tribes of the North were all but completely shut off from contact with those of the South. As a consequence such isolated tribes as those of Asher, Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali, dwelling in the upper region of the Jordan and adjacent to the comparatively friendly Phœnicians, began gradually to adopt a more natural, even though less immediately effectual, policy of alien conquest.

Conquest by warfare gave place among them to a process of social amalgamation. The result was a strong northern tendency toward tribal disunion. For a time the danger became so great as to threaten Israel's existence. The gravity of the situation was made more intense by the transition through which the Hebrew people were passing, from a shepherd and desert life to the prosperous state of an agricultural community. They were forced to relinquish their nomadic habits and to conform to those of the people whom they had come to conquer. They had scarcely begun to yield when they found themselves confronted with the danger of racial extermination. Life among the Canaanites, moreover, was, for the eager colonizing Israelites, beset with grave religious peril. Theirs was a religion based upon spiritual experience and developing ethical principles wrought out in the school of desert hardships. The religion of the Canaanites was a morally degrading worship of nature. Baal, the principal deity, was the god of the crops and the vineyards. Loyalty to him was regarded as an assurance of a plentiful harvest, and licentious self-abandonment was a token of the worshiper's appreciation of his bounty. As Jehovah was the God of the desert, so Baal was the acclaimed god of Palestinian soil. The Hebrew people were thus face to face with a great moral crisis. In the struggle which ensued their faith in Jehovah was victorious. It is to the everlasting credit of Israel that, in the many historical crises and trials through which it passed, it was able not only to preserve but to nurture and develop its spiritual life.

The colonial period in Hebrew history was one of extreme

hardship. Primitive life is essentially simple, but cruel. Tribal customs and laws are inexorable. Self-appointed leaders or hereditary tribal chieftains are despotic. Strength is measured in terms of the physical; revenge, which demands blood to be appeased, is a customary virtue; superstition hangs like a pall upon the struggling spirit of the people; tolerance is incompatible with its crude expression of courage; war is the general and desired order, peace only an interval of waiting, and often of suspense. Little wonder, therefore, that later Bible writers exalted the heroes of this testing period, and that they attributed the survival of the Hebrew people and its religious idealism to the special providence and care of God. With this verdict he who, in our time, reads history with discernment, will fully agree.

Our study, accordingly, of the book of the Judges leads us to the conclusion that the struggle of the Hebrews for a home in Palestine was not, as may be inferred from the book of Joshua when taken alone, the orderly work of a single decade of military conquest; it was a fierce conflict, a struggle of life and death, which lasted for a whole century. That, in fact, the subjugation of several of the well-fortified cities of the land was not completed until an even later time is clearly pointed out in the story of David's capture of Jerusalem from the ancient Jebusites after the battle of Gilboa and the death of Saul.[1] The Hebrew settlement in Palestine was probably accomplished only after a series of successful invasions. The Judah tribes, accompanied by Simeon and the Kenites, a tribe kindred to the Hebrews, appear to have been the first to get a foothold on Palestinian soil. Whether they made their entrance from the south, going up toward Beersheba directly from Kadesh as early as the time of Moses, or made the circuit about Edom and Moab, arriving by the way of the lower Jordan, is not known. The isolation of Judah from the northern tribes, so manifest in the time of Deborah and so keenly felt in both the South and the North during even the most secure days of the Hebrew mon-

[1] See II Sam. V:6–10.

archy, points to such an early southern invasion. This isolation, which in time led first to the division and then to the downfall of the Hebrew kingdom, may further be accounted for by the natural barrier formed between the north and south of Palestine by a chain of Canaanite fortresses extending westward from Jericho, through Jerusalem and Gibeon, to Gezer. North of this chain of fortified cities was the settlement of the Joseph tribes with the small but warlike kindred tribe of Benjamin.[1]

If the books of Joshua and Judges are considered as very nearly contemporaneous records—rather than as histories of two altogether separate periods—they tell an interesting story. Joshua, it is known, was an Ephraimite. His early successes in Palestine were in the region later occupied by the Joseph tribes, whose conquered possessions included the territory from Jericho westward to Ai, and thence northward to Schechem.[2]

A little later a third group of Hebrew tribes found its way into Palestine. Like the Joseph group, it came from the east-Jordan territory. The region which it sought for its home lay far to the north at the foot of the Lebanon Mountains and on the borderland of Phœnicia. These tribes, too, were shut off from their neighbors in the South by a line of fortified Canaanite cities. From east to west these fortresses were: Bethshean, Taanach, Ibleam, Megiddo, and Dor. All of them lay in the great plain of Esdraelon. These tribes, isolated as they were from their Hebrew kinsmen in the South, all but lost themselves in the process of racial assimilation which began immediately upon their arrival in the land. It continued with little interruption until the time of David when the two chains of fortresses were broken and Judah in the South, Joseph in central Palestine, and the community of tribes in the North were brought together to form, for one brief century, the united kingdom of Israel.

Little is known of the early colonial history of southern Palestine. Simeon seems to have been altogether lost in the tribal growth of its neighbors, the descendants of Caleb, and the Ken-

[1] The Joseph tribes were named after Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

[2] Schechem later became an Israelite sanctuary. It was made a city of refuge by Joshua, and given to the Levites. See Joshua XXIV: 1–27; XX:7; and XXI:21.

ites.[1] Judah comes into prominence only, and then suddenly, with the early outlaw period in the career of David. The brief account in Judges I: 1–21 is evidence of the close confederacy of these tribes of the south, and of their struggle to establish themselves in the land. Historically, however, this record is not in agreement with the later chapters of the book; nor with fragmentary accounts found elsewhere in the Biblical narrative, according to which the Hebrews, upon several occasions, undertook to enter Palestine from the south.[2]

The occupation of the interior of Palestine centers in the capture of two Canaanite strongholds: Jericho, in the lower valley of the Jordan, and Ai situated up toward the watershed on the road to the ancient sanctuaries of Bethel, Ramah, Shiloh, and Shechem. Jericho was the barricaded door to three important mountain trails leading into the heart of the country: one northwest to Bethel, another west to Jerusalem, and the third southwest to Hebron. The spies sent by Joshua found that at the opportune time this door could best be opened from within. When the city fell only those who aided in its capture escaped with their lives. The victory at Ai was, like that at Jericho, the result of well-combined strategy and courage. The small retreating Israelite army, serving as a decoy to entice the people from the precincts of the city, prepared the way for the larger army lying in ambush awaiting the opportunity to fall upon the unprotected inhabitants and to claim the mountain stronghold. Not to be outdone by the soldiers of Joshua, the Gibeonites, by means of a treaty effected through clever stratagem and ruse, secured protection both for themselves and for their neighbors in the mountain fortresses, where they proved to be a constant menace to the Israelite army. For this

[1] The Kenites were descendants of Abraham by his wife Keturah.

[2] Verses 8 and 21 in Judges I are in apparent disagreement. Moreover, they contradict later history which attributes the capture of Jerusalem to David. A comparison of Judges I with Numbers XXI:1–3 suggests that these are parallel accounts. If so, the account in Numbers XXI, together with that in Numbers XIV:39–45, is strongly in favor of an early occupation of Palestine from the south, as contrasted with the view that Judah's and Simeon's entrance was from the east by way of Jericho and the Jordan.

deception the Gibeonites were, at a later time, subjected to slavery. Nevertheless, their presence among the tribes of Israel, and the protection which they claimed as a consequence of Joshua's treaty, resulted in a tragic chapter in Hebrew history.

II. THE TRIBAL HEROES

The later victories in southern and northern Palestine attributed to Joshua are given a more appropriate chronological setting when placed in the period of the Judges. The Hebrew settlers in Palestine had no easy task in maintaining their foothold in the land. Their claim to supremacy met with repeated hostile challenge. Within Palestine rival tribes contended for possession; from without came the alien invader attracted by the opportunity for oppression or for plunder. Life itself was a hard struggle, and the maintenance of social traditions and religious ideals demanded the best strength and courage that the Hebrews could call to command. As we read the history of the period we see clearly that Israel's struggle in those dark days was for the survival of its ancestral spirit, for the preservation of its religious faith. The rod of the oppressor became, under providential guidance, the rod of spiritual chastening. Without it Israel might have fallen into the ways of Baalism and have ultimately disappeared in the moral and religious degeneracy of the adherents of that cult. The men who at this time were the heroes and saviours of their people were called Judges. They were the men providentially prepared to meet the crises of the period. They were alternately teachers, statesmen, warriors, and prophets. The greatest of them were noted for their unusual gift of leadership.

The narrative of the Judges records five signal attempts made by surrounding hostile peoples to crush the Hebrew colonists into servile subjection. In each instance their religious patriotism, under capable leadership, not only brought them deliverance, but increased their liberty, established their racial confidence, and added to their territorial strength. The first of these attempts came from the Moabites who occupied the up-

land country east of the Dead Sea. Moab was then under the rule of the famous king Eglon. Unable to forget his country's past humiliation at the hands of the Hebrews, he determined to lay a heavy tribute upon Israel in the lower west-Jordan valley.[1] This act aroused the bitter hostility of the warlike tribe of Benjamin upon which the burden fell. A daring deliverer appeared in the person of Ehud. Ehud was a man who feared neither foe nor bloodshed. He did not stop to gather an army. Instead he undertook by himself to carry to king Eglon the hard-earned tribute of his people. Before undertaking the servile task, however, he took the precaution to equip himself with a two-edged dagger which he had made with his own hands. Ehud was left-handed. For added convenience he accordingly put his little iron weapon under his sheep-skin jacket by his right side. Upon his arrival he delivered the tribute, after which he secured private admission to the palace of the king with the announcement that he had a message for him from Jehovah. "When the king reverently stood to receive the message, Ehud, drawing his dagger, delivered it point-blank and beyond the hilt." Then making his escape from the palace, he blew the trumpet call in the hill country of Ephraim, gathered a small army, and seized the crossing places of the lower Jordan, thereby bringing an end to further Moabite aggression.

The second victory for the Hebrew tribes occurred in the north. This time the oppressors were the Canaanites who, forming a coalition of well-fortified cities in the plain of Esdraelon, determined, under the leadership of Sisera, upon an utter subjugation of the Israelite shepherd tribes in the hills above the plain. The helplessness of these tribes lay in their lack of strong leadership. Isolated and weakened, they were rapidly falling into disunion. The crisis thus precipitated awakened a new and unusual leader in the person of Deborah, the prophetess. Deb-

[1] In the days when the Hebrews left the desert to enter Palestine, the Moabites stood in their way and sought to interfere. They called for the foreign prophet Balaam and demanded from him a favorable forecast of the outcome of their interference. Balaam confounded them by his announcement of Israel's victory ovr Moab and future prosperity in the newly-acquired land.

orah proved herself worthy of her prophetic office. This is seen in the spiritual insight and moral courage with which she prepared to meet the hour of Israel's peril. The danger, she realized, was real and imminent. It called for immediate action. In a short time Israel's sons in every village heard the challenge of her invitation to "come up to the help of Jehovah against the mighty." The response, if not unanimous, was generous. The first of the clansmen to answer to her call was Barak. He was supported by a strong company of chieftains from Naphtali and Zebulun. The leaders of Issachar, Deborah's own clan, were there. Ephraim was represented; so, naturally, was Benjamin. Others, however, like Reuben and Gilead, east of the Jordan, though sympathetic with their kinsmen in the struggle which confronted them, remained at home with their flocks. Dan and Asher were apparently content to become affiliated with their Phœnician neighbors to the west, and so gave no heed to the call. The Southern tribes of Simeon, Levi, and Judah would gladly have joined in a battle that might free them from the oppressing Canaanites, of whose presence they were kept in constant remembrance by the intervening wall of fortified cities which shut them off from their Northern kinsmen. It appears, however, from the absence of their names in the roll-call of the tribes in the famous triumph song of Deborah, that they were too far away from the scene of hostility to be counted among the clans of Israel.

The battle was fought on the fertile plain of Esdraelon, noted in the history of warfare for its valley of Megiddo, the scene of many decisive conflicts in subsequent years. The armies of Israel rallied in the region of Mt. Tabor. Coming down the hills to the plain they were met by the helmeted and armored Canaanite charioteers. Onward they came with the resounding gallop of the hoofs of their steeds. The Israelites, terror-stricken as they must have been at the unusual sound and sight, could do nothing but march forward to apparent death. The strength of the army of Barak lay in its splendid courage and religious patriotism. Its victory, however, came by the help of Jehovah. The timely appearance of a storm intervened to turn the tide in

Israel's favor. The valley of the river Kishon became the scene of a great flood, causing the unwieldy chariots of the Canaanites to sink in the deep soft soil, and spreading confusion and terror among the horses and their drivers. As they turned to find refuge in flight, their course led them directly into the still deeper river bed of the Kishon where many perished. Sisera, the leader, fled northward, hoping to escape the attention of the pursuing soldiers of Israel. He sought refuge in the tent of Heber the Kenite, where he met an ignominious death at the hand of Jael, the Kenite's wife.

The story of this memorable victory appears in double narrative in the fourth and fifth chapters of Judges. Of the two, the older account in Chapter V is a poem. This version, known as the Song of Deborah, is a rare and noble product of Hebrew poetic genius. The rapidity and skilful movement of the narrative, its vivid dramatic portraiture, and the intensity and contrasting elements of emotion revealed in it as the writer passes from the call to patriotism to curses upon the unresponsive, and from the tragedy of inglorious defeat to the exultant joy of victory, mark the poem as one of the literary masterpieces of the Old Testament. Its authenticity as history is undisputed; no portion of scripture of equal antiquity rivals it in its representation of primitive Hebrew life.

The consequences of Israel's victory over the Canaanites were far-reaching and final. It forever put an end to the Canaanite supremacy in northern Palestine. Henceforth the Hebrews were to be free to extend the boundaries of their territory, to develop their own resources, to assimilate the subordinate Canaanite population, and to move forward on the road to political government and toward the development of their religious institutions.

The next of the heroes to save his people from oppression was Gideon. The hostile invaders of this time were the Midianites, a desert-roving people occupying the region east of the Red Sea. They had on previous occasions caused the Hebrews trouble by their marauding and plundering habits. Now, at the season of the grain harvest, they came in large caravans, probably on

camels, entered Palestine at the point where the plain of Jezreel merges into the valley of the Jordan, and ravaged the territory of the central tribes. At first the Israelites, lacking leadership, were unable to offer resistance. Then Gideon arose. A Midianite band had overpowered and slain two of his own brothers. In the call to revenge he heard the voice of Jehovah; it was the call to free his people from the cruel and unbearable Midianite yoke. It came to him by night while he was threshing grain in an underground wine-press to escape a Midianite attack. He gathered a small company of three hundred men, made a sudden midnight attack upon the unsuspecting marauders, drove them headlong down the narrow valley eastward across the Jordan, and pursued them along the Jabbok to the desert border. On his return Gideon brought with him Zebah and Zalmunna, the two Midianite chieftains, and slew them in the presence of his sons in atonement for his brothers' blood. When his own people, convinced of his ability to rule, took steps to make him king, he refused. Instead he established a religious sanctuary in his own capital city in order to remind the people that they owed allegiance to none but Jehovah. Later, after Gideon's death, Abimelech, one of his sons, remembering the generous attitude of the people toward his father, gathered a following among the Canaanite inhabitants of the city of Shechem, and established himself there as a self-appointed claimant to the title of Israel's first king. His tyrannous attitude toward the people, however, soon precipitated a rebellion. Following a short and murderous reign, he met an ignominious death.

The incident of Abimelech revealed to the Hebrew people the developing persistence, among themselves, of a strong twofold tendency: the first was toward the conservation of the democratic spirit which still survived from the days of Israel's free life in the desert; the second was toward a steadily growing sense of the need of some sort of inter-tribal or racial unity, made possible under the inspiration and direction of capable but democratic leadership. Both of these tendencies came to frequent self-assertion in the later history of the Hebrew people.

Under the dominant influence of the one they became a nation, and the nation in turn became an empire; the strength of the other was an increasingly significant factor in the growth and preservation of Israel's religion.

The fourth crisis in later Hebrew colonial history came with the appearance of the molesting Ammonites. The hero at this time was Jephthah. Jephthah, though a Gileadite, was of mixed blood. Jealous of his reputation as a warrior, his kinsmen had driven him from his home. Before long he had gained a name for himself as the successful leader of an outlaw band in the neighboring land of Tob.[1] The people of Gilead, occupying the open frontier east of the Jordan, were in constant danger of invasion from the desert borderlands that lay beyond. Ever since the days of the early settlement of Palestine by the Hebrew tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, the Gileadites had been separated from their Israelite brothers west of the Jordan, and had been forced to endure the hostile inroad of the alien or to fight him singlehanded. The call came to Jephthah to rid the land of the Ammonites. He accepted on the condition that, if successful, he was to become their acknowledged chieftain. The condition proved satisfactory to the Gileadites; whereupon Jephthah made the solemn vow to Jehovah which resulted in the tragic sacrifice and death of his daughter. The attitude of the Biblical writer—who voices here neither surprise, nor protest, but only the extreme pathos of the incident—clearly suggests that the sacrifice of human life, barbarous and terrible as it seems to us, was, in the rough and trying times of Israel's colonial life, considered an appropriate if not necessary means of securing the good will of Jehovah, or of expressing to Him a deep-felt sense of personal gratitude. Centuries of spiritual struggle were yet required to prepare the way for Israel's moral development. She had yet to learn the later lesson taught her by her prophets, that the sacrifice pleasing to Jehovah is not the shedding of innocent blood, but the gift of a life dedicated to justice, tempered by mercy, and hal-

[1] Tob has been variously identified as one of a number of possible localities east of the north-Jordan or Sea of Galilee.

lowed by a sense of its inward sacredness and intimacy with God.[1]

The fifth among the most harassing oppressors of the Hebrews during the period of the Judges were the Philistines. They occupied the fertile maritime plain of southern Palestine, and threatened Israel's hold on the adjacent mountain territory to the east. The Philistines were a people of a well-advanced civilization. They had probably migrated to their Palestinian home from southern Asia Minor, or from the Mediterranean island of Crete.[2] Their gradual increase in strength had previously menaced Egypt, and was now beginning positively to assert itself in the whole region of Palestine, from the plain of Esdraelon southward to the desert borders of Judah. Subsequent history shows that it was the steady growth and aggressiveness of the Philistines which first awakened the Hebrews to a realization of the need of a unified effort of self-defense, and which a generation later led to the establishment of the Hebrew monarchy.

The contribution of Samson to this achievement, however, was not marked. The historian, who followed popular tradition in recounting the daring feats of the tribal hero, yielded to an over-estimation of his importance as a deliverer of the Hebrews at this time of Philistine oppression. As an individual, a type of his race and his time, Samson is indeed interesting. The stories which gather around his person are among the most fascinating in Hebrew literature. Like many others whose religious value

[1] This newly developing conception, as expressed in the prophetic teachings, is voiced by the prophet Micah in the following words: "Jehovah hath shown thee what is good; and what doth He require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." (Micah VI:8.)

[2] Amos IX:7, and Deut. II:23, refer to the Philistines as coming from Caphtor, which has been variously identified as Crete, Cyprus, and a region in the Egyptian Delta. Present-day scholars incline toward the opinion that the Philistines were Cretans. The further opinion that the Cherethites and Pelethites, who made up the nucleus of King David's army, were Philistines is in corroboration of that view. Whether the Philistines were of Semitic or Aryan blood is uncertain; probability inclines toward the latter view. Contemporary Egyptian history records that, in the time of Joshua, Rameses II checked hostile invasion of six or seven nations of Greek names, whose pioneers had settled on the African coast in the region west of the Delta. See Hastings Dict. of the Bible, Vol. III, p. 840.

is only slightly apparent, these stories have greatly enriched the literary popularity of the Old Testament. They have helped, moreover, to increase our general knowledge of Bible races, customs, and times. Appraised morally, even by the standards of his own age, the character of Samson is scarcely a worthy example. Judged historically, his achievements were purely individual; their influence, calculated to intimidate the Philistines, only harassed them and aroused them to later aggressive warfare. Nevertheless there is a sense in which Samson deserves a place among the early Biblical heroes. He represents a primitive stage in Israel's national history. He typifies the strange intermingling of moral weaknesses and virtues so characteristic of his age. Samson, deliberately choosing death as an opportunity to give witness to the reassumption of his sacred vow, is more than a melodramatic actor; he is a tragic and strangely impressive figure; his life is offered up in restitution for his wasted years.

It has already been said that life among the Hebrews during the period of the Judges was rough and hard. The peoples who surrounded them, habituated to a subsistence on the spoils of plunder and war, were rude and barbaric. Tribal customs among them were on a low, primitive level. The intermingling of races tended toward social degeneracy and the rise of bitter feuds. Religious superstition everywhere prevailed. Palestine, always on the frontier of civilization, knew only intervals of peace and rest. The sword, more often than the word, was arbiter of social and inter-tribal justice. Yet existence in Palestine was not wholly without its bright side. Beneath the rough exterior wholesome tendencies of family and religious life were starting to develop. The reader gets glimpses of them in the incidents which center upon the daughter of Jephthah, the birth of Samson, and the birth and consecration of Samuel. The noblest representation, however, of life during the period is found in the book of Ruth. Though drawn with the imaginative aid of a writer of a very much later time, the picture seems true to the age. It acquaints us with the personal domestic fortunes of a simple Judean family; it illustrates the common customs of tribal migrations and racial intermarriage; it stands as a beautiful example of filial

and feminine piety. Above all, it is the picture of a true heroine, a Moabite maiden worthy of a place by the side of Deborah, the prophetess: charming in her simplicity, beautiful in her faith, strong in her devotion, and honored by her marriage and adoption into the rank of the ancestry of the illustrious King David. The book itself is one of the short-story masterpieces of the Bible. It is a pastoral idyl of singular charm and beauty. Its spiritual atmosphere amid worldly surroundings is a source of comfort and a benediction to the reader.

CHAPTER IX

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HEBREW MONARCHY

THERE are two Biblical histories which deal with the rise and fall of the Hebrew kingdom. The first is found in the books of Samuel and Kings; the second in I and II Chronicles. The Samuel-Kings history was originally one document; its subsequent division into four separate books was the work of later Biblical translators.[1] According to the present arrangement of the narrative, I Samuel deals with the work of Samuel, the reign of Saul, and the rise of David; II Samuel gives us a record of the reign and family history of David: while the two books of the Kings review the history of the Hebrew monarchy from the accession of Solomon to the time of the Babylonian exile. The historical period covered in Samuel-Kings is one of approximately five centuries, from about 1050 to 586 B. C.[2]

The duplicate narrative of the Chronicler differs from the Samuel-Kings history in both its literary method and its religious purpose. It is a priestly history, the work of a post-Exilic writer whose interest lay chiefly in the origin and development of religious institutions. It is fragmentary and intensely partisan in its preference for the kingdom and kings of Judah; and its punctilious insistence on statistical formulas has won for it fewer readers than it actually deserves. The literary structure of Samuel-Kings points to two immediately

[1] The translators of the Septuagint were the first to make the division.

[2] The present chapter covers the period from 1050 to 1010; the chapter which follows continues chronologically from 1010 to 937. The date assigned to the accession of Saul is 1025. David's accession followed in 1010; and Solomon's in 970.

[3] The approximately assigned date for the Chronicler's history is 300 B. C. The Samuel-Kings history is of a much earlier origin. Portions of it were written as far back as David's own time; others are the work of the historians J (850 B. C.) and E (750 B. C.). The entire historical work was completed at some time during the Babylonian Exile, between 586 and 538 B. C.

accessible original sources. One of these was probably the combined narrative of the Jehovist and the Elohist historians. The other was a body of collected popular traditions which, in the course of the years, had gathered about such renowned characters as Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon. This latter source is very nearly contemporary with the events which it records. It is, accordingly, of unparalleled authenticity, and the one indispensable source for the study of this period of Hebrew history. It is a record of the kingdom builders, and of the Golden Age in Old Testament times. No group of Bible stories exceeds it in human interest; and no portion of the Old Testament presents larger possibilities for ethical and religious teaching. Life is here depicted in the completeness of its three-fold aspect: (1) on its individual and biographical side; (2) with respect to its social and institutional characteristics; and (3) on the side of its specifically spiritual and supramundane relationships. It is a philosophy of history in which the writer reveals a genius for moral and spiritual discernment. It is history itself idealized and transformed into sacred scripture.

I. SAMUEL AND SAUL

The first step toward the establishment of the Hebrew kingdom was the founding of a consecrated home. Israel's history makes a new beginning with the birth and call of Samuel. Himself a prophet, and therefore by nature and training a genius of the things of the spirit, he became the maker of Israel's first kings, and the infant kingdom's earliest guide and spiritual patron. Like the Judges before him, Samuel arose to meet an impending crisis. Since the days of Samson the land had had no rest from the harassing hand of the Philistines. Samson had shown individual valor, but he had lacked the genius of leadership. The Hebrew tribes of southern Palestine had had, since their settlement there, a comparatively tranquil history. No great danger, comparable to that of the North, had wrought its effect of tribal unity. Proximity to the desert had kept alive in them the free and democratic spirit of Israel's early tribal life.

The Philistines, on the contrary, had been growing steadily stronger and into a consolidated people. More advanced in political government and in the science of warfare, they had begun gradually to assume the rôle of the cautious but determined aggressor. The results, thus far, had been humiliating to the unorganized and peaceful descendants of Caleb and Judah. Presently an event occurred which threatened immediate and complete disaster. Following an introductory series of battles on the western border of the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, the Philistine army stormed the citadel of Shiloh, despoiled the Hebrew sanctuary located there, and captured the sacred Ark. The Ark had, since the days of Moses, been the symbol of the presence of Jehovah. Its loss quickly aroused the popular fear that Israel had become a God-forsaken people. Patriotism, however, at this critical moment came to the rescue. Samuel, now an acknowledged prophet, assumed the office of temporary leadership. Israel must be aroused to defense. War for freedom was inevitable. Samuel himself, however, though a patriot, was not a soldier. His office was that of a seer, a spiritual counselor and moral reformer. Later Hebrew history calls him Israel's judge and among the people of his time he was known and revered as a "man of God." The man chosen by him to be Israel's deliverer was Saul, the son of Kish, a Benjamite and a warrior. The choice, no doubt prompted by popular demand, was signified by the anointment of young Saul as the Hebrew nation's first acknowledged king.

Biblical history gives us two accounts of the crowning and early kingship of Saul. The later historian, writing with a fondness for the democratic freedom of Israel's early days, and himself opposed to the developing monarchism, gives a greater place of importance to Samuel than to Saul in the early national career of the Hebrew people.[1] The earlier writer recognizes in Samuel a seer rather than a judge, and looks upon Saul as

[1] The point of view here is that of the Deuteronomist who wrote some time shortly before 621 B. C. He held that Israel's sufferings and misfortunes were the direct consequences of its apostasy from Jehovah. According to this view Jehovah would have brought deliverance and insured protection to Israel in its times of crises, if the people had not abandoned their former and nobler theocratic ideals.

rising naturally, albeit providentially, to the kingship, following his military successes in the defeat of the Ammonites, and his secret interview and coronation at the hands of the prophet. The two originally independent narratives make it clear to us that there were from the beginning two divergent popular views regarding Israel's adopted form of monarchial government. Their divergence is noticeable in the clear distinction they make between the prophetic ministry and acknowledged royal prerogative. Throughout subsequent years kings ruled politically, and often with absolute power; but none except the most arrogant and despotic of them dared to silence or scorn the ever present and insistent prophetic voice. The prophet's place in Hebrew history was unique. From the monarchy's beginning to its end he stood as the guardian and defender of the people and their religious faith. He was too often ignored, but he was almost always tolerated. In the end he became Israel's saviour and the preserver of the gift of its faith to the future world.[1]

The earlier account, which represents Samuel as a seer and Saul as a popular and afterward royal leader, more adequately meets the sum of the historical requirements. The young Hebrew nation had come to the political crossroads. Philistine aggression called for a unified effort of defense. Unity implied organization and leadership. The disappearance of the Ark and Saul's Ammonite victories clearly pointed out the way of action. The territory of the tribe of Benjamin was, by reason of its central location and its reputation for past bravery, the most logical place for Samuel to go in search of a leader. The prophet's quest, pursued under prayer for divine guidance, led him into the path of young Saul. When the two met face to face Samuel perceived that the hour for the beginning of Israel's deliverance was at hand. The influence upon Saul of his brief interview with Samuel is best described in the historian's own words: "And it was so, that, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart." The experience of

[1] This same difference of view between the royalists and the moralists, as the prophets may not improperly be called, is noticeable in the Messianism of post-Exilic Hebrew history. To the one group the center of the Messianic hope was national; to the other it was ethical and spiritual.

religious ecstasy with which Saul returned to his native village prompted the report that he was about to be numbered among the prophets. The young prince, as yet unidentified by his village associates, accepted his appointment as the call of God.

Thereafter a month passed in quiet preparation. Then suddenly came the summons to action. An Ammonite invasion was threatening to lay waste the city of Jabesh in the east-Jordan territory of Gilead. Saul's instantaneous response to the call for help, and his decisive victory, made him the acknowledged leader of the time. By popular election at the sacred altar at Gilgal, he became Israel's first adopted king. His first definite task was to strike a decisive blow at Philistine supremacy. The opportunity came through the courageous action of his own son Jonathan who made a successful raid and captured the Philistine garrison stationed in his native town of Gibeah. The Philistines accepted Jonathan's act as an open challenge to war and stationed themselves in the town of Michmash, directly opposite Gibeah, across a valley extending westward from the Jordan into central Palestine. The Hebrews, as yet inadequately organized, fled panic-stricken toward the mountain fastnesses. Here again Jonathan came to the rescue. Accompanied by his trusted armor-bearer, he found his way into the valley and across it to the steep cliffs. Climbing to the top he seized the fortified garrison and scattered the Philistine hosts. The army of Saul now gathered and scattered the Philistines who thereafter, until the end of Saul's reign, made no further effort to recapture this lost territory in the center of Palestine. It was in connection with this victory at Michmash that Saul made a foolish vow which nearly cost Jonathan, his own son and the hero of the day, his life. But popular opinion, not yet willing to acquiesce in the decree of a monarch, however sincere he might be in his religious and personal convictions, carried the day and Jonathan was spared.

Shortly after this time processes began to operate which effected a change in Saul's temper. The change was brought about by the estrangement which occurred between himself and the prophet Samuel. The event which precipitated the

break is related by the Bible writer. Saul's unsanctioned sacrifice of the saved spoils of battle taken from the defeated desert-roving Amalekites was a designated offense against Jehovah. A curse lay upon Amalek, arch-enemy of Israel's desert days, and the saving of spoils of battle after war with him had been placed under taboo.[1] The actual cause of the estrangement, however, lay deeper; it had its root in Saul's growing disregard for the aged seer, and for his devoted followers, the younger prophets, to whom the king owed his early opportunities and his religious guidance. Saul, in a word, was a spiritual disappointment to Samuel; the king failed to measure up to the prophet's expectations. Later prophetic leaders and writers supported him in this position. The democratic spirit in them made them the strong opponents of all tendencies toward despotism and autocracy. This spirit survived as an integral part of their religious faith. Through it they conserved Israel's noblest institutions, and by it they fearlessly, and sometimes severely, judged their rulers and kings. History, since then, has abundantly demonstrated that they were justified in so doing. Nevertheless this attitude of the Biblical writers of a later time works a hardship with many worthy characters upon whom subsequent years have not cast the full light of historical understanding. Saul is such a character. After making allowances for his faults, and for the resultant popular resentment, with its tragic and altogether pitiable reaction upon him, he stands out as a man of actual achievement and true heroism. He deserves no less praise for what he did than is due Samuel, the prophet, for his approved wisdom in making Saul his own first choice for the kingship.

The fact that Saul was able to maintain himself in his position of a newly-created kingship without open rebellion was in itself significant. His success in keeping the Philistines at

[1] This custom of placing a ban upon certain things or persons was a general primitive custom which Israel seems at this early time to have shared. When a people like the Amalekites were thus placed under taboo, their possessions, including the women and the children, were "devoted to Jehovah," i. e., sacrificially slain. See I Sam. XV:33. Judged by present day moral standards, Samuel's execution of Agag seems mere butchery. The incident shows that even the great prophet was a child of his own time, a time when fear and superstition were deeply rooted in religion.

bay during the early formative period in the development of the Hebrew kingdom is not to be underestimated. David's beautiful elegy, found in the first chapter of II Samuel, is conclusive proof of Saul's true greatness. To be great, however, does not mean to be without fault. Human history attests that, with a few rare exceptions, the work of the world has been accomplished through men of combined weakness and strength; men who have excelled in noble passion and devotion, notwithstanding certain personal faults. Saul was such a man; such also, in his own way, was David. Two outstanding weaknesses kept Saul from attaining the greatest success of leadership and individual moral development. The first was his excessive and freely nurtured individualism; the second was his jealous fear of the rise of opposition. The one led to his untimely break with Samuel; the other drove him through torturing moods of melancholy, to his heartless persecution of David, and at last to his tragic death upon the field of battle.

II. THE RISE OF DAVID

The appearance of David was an epochal event in Hebrew history. Three accounts, apparently contemporary in their origin, record his introduction into public life. In the first he is presented as the youth whom Samuel finds in Bethlehem in the home of Jesse, his father, and whom he anoints as the rejected Saul's successor. Taken alone, this account—by its association of Samuel with David in an act which, if Saul suspected it, could not have been regarded by him as anything but a determined conspiracy—tends to explain Saul's attitude toward the young rival prince and warrior. In the second account David is introduced to Saul as a reputed youth of valor, a singer and a player on the harp, who is thereafter invited to dispel the king's moods of melancholy with his music. In the third narrative David appears on the scene as the young hero who, while upon a visit with brothers at the battle front, enlists in Saul's army, which is fighting the Philistines, slays the Philistine giant Goliath, and thus becomes one of the king's select war-

riors.[1] The three accounts supplement each other. Considered together, they give us a complete early biography of David. We get from them clear glimpses into his private life, his musical genius, his early religious training, his shepherd experiences among the lower hills of Judea, his courage and skill as a warrior, his patriotism, his friendship with Jonathan, the king's own son, his marriage to Michal, the king's daughter, his rapidly increasing popularity among the people of Saul's court, his endangered position with the aroused jealousy of Saul, and, above all, his spirit of patriotic loyalty and personal magnanimity as, driven from the king's court, he begins the period of his outlaw life.

David's actual career began when he was forced to become a wanderer and found himself a hunted man. His discovery that Saul believed him a traitor and was intent upon his death, drove him from the court. Even the friendship of Jonathan was no warrant for his safety. It was a consolation, however, in the dark days that followed, and kept alive in him the faith and finer human impulses which won him a large immediate following. Dismissed from Saul's presence as a mistrusted warrior, he rapidly developed into an independent and masterful leader. David's gift of leadership and his devoted loyalty to his friends became in after years two of his most priceless possessions. They won for him both the power and the popular admiration which made his reign over Israel the most successful and notable in the nation's history.

The years of David's fugitive life fall into three brief periods: the first marked by his flight southward from Gibeah to the cave of Adullam; the second by his retreat to the region of Ziph in southeastern Judah; the third by his settlement at Ziglag as a temporary vassal of the Philistines. Warned by Jonathan of imminent danger, David first sought refuge among his kinsmen at Nob. Here Ahimelech, the priest of the local sanctuary, provided him with food and with the sword of Goliath.[2] Thus

[1] The first account is recorded in I Sam. XVI:1–13; the second in I Sam. XVI: 14–23; the third in I Sam. XVII.

[2] For the innocent service of kindness to David, who presented himself as Saul's servant, the whole family of Ahimelech, except Abiathar, was accused of high treason

armed and aided, David reached Adullam on the western border of Judah overlooking the Philistine plain. Here he gathered about him a band of his own clansmen, accompanied by refugees from the border region, and began the organization of the outlaw army with which he was later to win victories for himself and his newly united kingdom. Following a successful attack upon the Philistines for the relief of the little town of Keilah, about five miles to the south of the cave of Adullam, he is forced to flee for safety southeastward to the region of Ziph.

Two interesting events in David's life belong to this period of his sojourn among the Ziphites. One is his generous sparing of Saul's life while the king lies asleep and unguarded at the cool opening of a rock cave; the other is his marriage to the beautiful and gentle Abigail, the former wife of Nabal the Carmelite. Each of these incidents reflects credit upon David as a young man of noble and generous impulses and of personal honor and respect.

Fearing the danger of being betrayed into Saul's hands, David at length decided to take a formidable step. With his six hundred men he committed himself to the hospitality of Achish, king of Gath of the Philistines, who welcomed him to an alliance and stationed him at Ziglag, a small town on the southern Philistine border. This period of residence among the enemy of his own people taught David many valuable lessons in political diplomacy. It became necessary for him to show his loyalty to his anxious kinsmen of Judah, without incurring the suspicion and sacrificing the hospitality of Achish. Thus, while feigning attacks upon Judah, he made frequent raids into the Bedouin territory to the south, and, upon his return, distributed the spoils among his Judean brethren. The crisis came when the Philistines planned an advance against Saul. Their object was to dispossess Israel of the fertile territory in upper central Palestine. David was asked to join the expedition. Fortunately for him, and for the cause of the invaders, the officers of the Philis-

and summarily executed. Ahimelech was betrayed by Doeg, a despicable Edomite, who sought Saul's favor. Abiathar joined David, and later became a priest in the king's household.

tine army had reasons for doubting the reasonableness of their request, and David was allowed to return to Ziglag. His arrival was unexpected and providential. During his army's absence the neighboring Amalekites had raided the village and carried off quantities of spoils, and with them Abigail and the families of David's men. David made hastened pursuit, and overtook the raiders in the early night while they were feasting on the looted spoils. The property which, in turn, was taken from the Amalekites, was divided among his followers and their kinsmen in Judah.

In the meantime the Philistine army moved northeastward into the plain of Esdraelon and pitched its camp in a place called Shunem. Saul and his sons, sensing the desperate struggle that was to follow, gathered their men on Mt. Gilboa. Strategically Saul's position was one of decided advantage; in every other way, however, he was ill prepared for the conflict. First of all, he lacked the aid and wise counsel of friends and leaders whom, in the days of his ascendancy to power, he had either driven from himself or ignored. Samuel, the prophet, from whom he had long since become estranged, was dead; and the school of young prophets among whom, for a brief time, he had himself been numbered, had apparently turned against him. David, his ablest and most devoted friend, had been driven to exile. Except for Jonathan, noble and faithful unto death, Saul now stood alone. In the second place he was not yet the leader of a united people. There was little evidence in the newly founded kingdom of either political or social solidarity. The early years of Saul's leadership had indeed been full of promise; but his later prolonged pursuit of David had not only alienated the clans centering in the southern tribe of Judah, but weakened his own army and slackened his hold on the more distant tribes of the North. This lack of unity or actual political government was clearly demonstrated by the desertion of many of the chiefs of the tribe of Manasseh at the very eve of the king's last battle.

Finally, and worst of all, Saul had lost his self-confidence. With it had gone his sense of divine fellowship and approval.

His spirit had fallen to earth, and he felt himself utterly abandoned. Deserted even by the oracles of Jehovah, and desperate in his fear of the outcome of the immediate crisis, he sought the services of a medium. The woman, by her fear of being betrayed, revealed that she was not without knowledge of Saul's religious attitude and the events of his career. Her words, spoken in a trance, did no more than give utterance to the grave and fearful anticipations of the king. Saul, hearing the verdict of his own doom, was completely overcome. After partaking of nourishment prepared by the now sympathetic woman, he arose and went out into the night. The consequences of this visit for the next day's battle were fateful. The hopelessness of the struggle was at once apparent to the leaders of Israel's army. Completely routed by the over-mastering Philistines, the Israelites took to flight. Jonathan and his brothers were slain, and Saul, identified by one of the Philistine archers, was mortally wounded. In order to escape ignominious treatment at the hands of the enemy, the king hurled himself upon his own sword. Saul's body, and those of his sons, were discovered by the Philistines on the following day. They were stripped of their royal armor and hung as a public spectacle upon the walls of the adjacent town of Bethshan.

The news of Saul's death spread quickly throughout the land. When it crossed the Jordan to the people of Jabesh Gilead, they remembered the king's kindness of bygone days. It was for their deliverance that he had fought his first battle, the battle against the Ammonites. They promptly organized a band of valiant men who marched by night into Bethshan, took the bodies of Saul and his sons from the walls, and, with solemn rites, buried them in their own village.

Information of the tragic outcome of the battle reached David at Ziglag. It was significant news for him, for it meant his freedom and a welcome return to his own home. A momentary expression of satisfaction and relief might, under the circumstances, have been pardonable. The true character of David, however, asserted itself. At a previous time when Saul, asleep and unguarded, was at his mercy, he might easily have opened

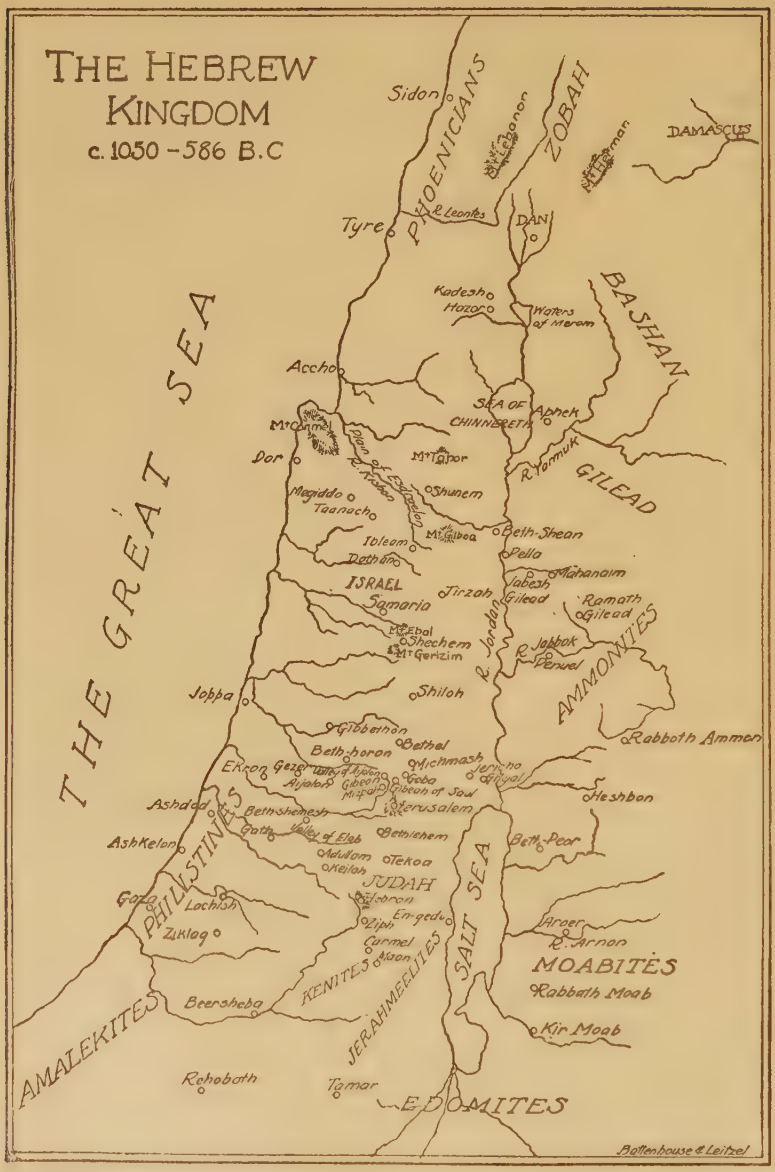
the way for himself to the throne by the use of his own sword. As then he had scorned violence, so now he overcame the temptation to inhumane selfishness. His experience, his natural magnanimity, and his faith in God, were opening a better way for him to the mind and heart of his people. Those who determined to profit by Saul's death learned that the judgments of David did not lack severity. On the other hand, those who sought his counsel and consolation found him openly and sincerely sympathetic. David bore no rancor toward the dead king. He was moved only to a profound sorrow. He did not permit either his pity or his personal ambition to cause him to overlook Saul's true greatness. Saul, like Jonathan, was a hero. David's lament over their death is not only a great literary classic; it is the voice of his own soul.[1]

Judged by the circumstances of his time, Saul's work was well done. During his whole public career he was more a soldier than a general, more a hero than a king. The Hebrew state had not yet developed to the point where military leadership could be displaced by civil authority; the loosely united tribes had not yet been won from a patriarchal to a political form of government. Without Saul's preparatory work the more lasting and illustrious achievement of David would scarcely have been possible.

Briefly summarized, Saul's contribution to Hebrew history was five-fold: (1) he undertook, and accomplished with considerable success, the extraordinarily difficult task of consolidating a group of struggling independent Hebrew tribes; (2) he fought mightily to hold at bay the oppressing Philistines; (3) he laid the first foundations for the establishment of an organized Hebrew state; (4) he opened the way to commercial and international relationship between the Hebrew people and the outside world; (5) above all, he served his own and subsequent

[1] This elegy, found in II Samuel I:17–27, was taken by the Biblical writer from the ancient historical source book of Jashar. It is one of the most touching and beautiful in all literature. From a soft plaintive dirge it rises to a full and noble expression of a great grief. Then, from its height of an exalted paean of praise, it settles gently down, near its close, to a quiet tremor, and ends abruptly with a lyric cry.

ages by furnishing them an example of the significant truth that life, even at its best, is an uncertain adventure and a great struggle, often against insurmountable obstacles, and that, however tragic in its course and its close, it never fails to serve a definite providential purpose.


THE HEBREW KINGDOM
c. 1050 – 586 B.C
Sidon
PHOENICIANS
ZOBAH
DAMASCUS
Tyre
R. Leontes
DAN
Kadesh
Hazor
Waters of Merom
BASHAN
THE GREAT SEA
Accho
SEA OF CHINNERETH
Mt. Carmel
Dor
Mt. Tabor
R. Yarmuk
GILEAD
Megiddo
Taanach
Shunem
Mt. Gilboa
Beth-Shean
Ibleam
Pella
Jabesh
Mahanaim
ISRAEL
Samaria
Tirzah
Gilead
Ramath Gilead
Mt. Ebal
Shechem
Mt. Gerizim
R. Jordan
R. Jabbok
Penuel
AMMONITES
Joppa
Shiloh
Gibeah
Bethel
Rabboth Ammon
Beth-horon
Michmash
Jericho
Ekron
Gezer
Aijalon
Geba
Mt. of Olives
Heshbon
Ashdod
Beth-shemesh
Jerusalem
Gath
Bethlehem
Ashkelon
Adullam
Tekoa
Beth-peor
PHILISTINES
Keilah
JUDAH
SALT SEA
Gaza
Lachish
Hebron
Aroer
Ziklag
En-gedi
Ziph
R. Arnon
Carmel
Maon
MOABITES
KENITES
Rabbath Moab
Beersheba
JERAHMEELITES
Kir Moab
AMALEKITES
Rehoboth
Tamar
EDOMITES
Bottenhouse & Leitzel

CHAPTER X

THE UNITED HEBREW KINGDOM

THE fact that Saul's death furthered the cause and ambition of David did not detract from the genuineness of his grief. Confident of popular support and that his time would come, he was content to wait. Though apprehensive of the grave outcome of the Philistine advance against Israel, he could scarcely have expected it to be brought to so calamitous an end. The loss of Jonathan, his beloved friend, shocked him beyond recovery to the end of his days. Nevertheless, his grief did not keep him from taking a step in the interest both of his own future and of his patriotic ideals. His first act was his return to Hebron where the people of Judah gathered about him and publicly acclaimed him their king. Next, in order to conciliate the tribes of the North who had been loyal to Saul, he sent a personal message of appreciation to the people of Jabesh-Gilead, in which he thanked them for their kind remembrance of Saul's former service in their behalf, and for the tribute they had paid the king and his sons in giving them an honorable burial. He then took over the reins of government in Hebron where he ruled for seven years. In the meantime the monarchy in the North was continued by Saul's only surviving son Esh-Baal, whom Abner, Saul's former field marshal, had set up as king in Gilead east of the Jordan, whither the army of Israel had retreated to escape further Philistine aggression.

David's military commanding general was Joab. The rivalry which arose between the two small Hebrew kingdoms was aggravated by a bitter feud between Abner, regent for Esh-Baal and Joab. The result was a further weakening of Israel's position against the steadily increasing power and advantage of the

Philistines. Abner, in the North, clearly sensed the situation. He made overtures to David for a uniting of the two kingdoms hoping, as a reward for his services, to be made David's military commander-in-chief. Joab, resentful and arbitrary, seized the opportunity offered by Abner's visit to David's court, and slew his rival. The dastardly act displeased David and he made no effort to conceal his displeasure. His sincerity and open candor found favor with the counselors in the court of Saul's successor. They realized, moreover, the futility of prolonged civil strife. Between the alternatives of a threatened subjection to the Philistines, and an offer of allegiance to David, there was only one possible choice. Following Esh-Baal's death, at the hands of two of his own captains, the peoples of the various Hebrew tribes came at last to join heartily in crowning David king of a united Israel.

I. THE MONARCHY OF DAVID

The Philistines accepted this consolidation of the Hebrew tribes as an unmistakable challenge to war. None knew better than they the strength of David, and the task for which he had been unanimously and opportunely chosen. David was now a little past thirty years of age, strong, well trained, trusted, and surrounded by an able group of counselors and friends. For the moment, however, he felt himself to be inadequately prepared to meet the Philistines in an open and decisive battle. Thus, while they were advancing eastward toward the vicinity of Jerusalem, occupying the valley of Rephaim, David made a strategic retreat to his old stronghold of Adullam. Two closely contested battles ensued, in both of which the army of Israel was victorious. It was on the eve of the first battle, while the Philistines were in possession of his native town of Bethlehem, that three of David's trusted warriors, to gratify their leader, broke through the Philistine guard, and brought him a drink of water from the well at which he had so often quenched his thirst in his boyhood days. His unselfish regard for the men,

who had thus for his sake risked their lives, is shown by the fact that he did not drink the water, but poured it to the ground as an offering of sacrifice to Jehovah.

The second battle in the valley of Rephaim definitely broke the yoke of Philistine mastery over Palestine. Other severe struggles followed, but David through them slowly gained the upper hand and finally drove the enemy out of Israelite territory. The climax of the victory came with his capture of the Philistine capital, the city of Gath. Beginning with that time the Philistines disappear from history as a rival power of the Hebrew nation.

Free at last to undertake the more definite task of building the Hebrew empire, David set about to accomplish three things: (1) to establish a more centrally located national capital; (2) to launch a military campaign against the group of surrounding nations which seized every opportunity to disturb the peace and to dispute the sovereignty of his people; (3) to secure and safeguard the future national development of Israel by a program of internal organization. The site he chose for the Hebrew capital was a small but well protected fortress situated on a hill occupied by the Jebusites, an ancient Canaanite tribe which had been able to maintain itself in this impregnable position since the earliest days of the conquest. The citadel was taken by David's men who gained entrance to it by means of the water tunnel which was fed by the brook Kidron and which led directly into the pool of Siloam within its walls. The name of this ancient little city was Jerusalem. The Biblical writer familiarly speaks of it as the stronghold of Zion; later it became more popularly known as the city of David, in honor of its founder. History, since then, has confirmed its distinction as the most noted city in existence.

The establishment of Jerusalem as the capital of David's new kingdom was, however, not complete until it became the central religious shrine of the whole Israelite nation. To make it such the king sent for the sacred Ark which, during the early campaigns of the period of the Judges, had been given a resting

place at Shiloh.[1] The Philistines had destroyed the sacred village and taken the Ark with them into their borders; but, finding that its presence brought them the curse of Jehovah, they had been eager to be rid of it, and had sent it back into Hebrew territory. Now that Israel was free and in undisputed possession of the land of Jehovah's promise, the ancient symbol of His abiding presence was transferred to Jerusalem. It was placed there to remain as a continued reminder of God's goodness to Israel in times past, and as the token of the further promise of His protecting guidance in the future.

David next turned toward the project of his foreign wars. He was by this time the commanding leader of a thoroughly organized and disciplined army. Beside him stood three notable heroes who had already won distinction in battle.[2] Next to them was Joab, David's field marshal and manager of his campaigns. Then came Abishai, Joab's brother, captain of a select company of thirty heroes or "mighty men of valor." Finally there was Benaiah, himself famous among the Thirty, and the honored leader of David's old-time bodyguard of six hundred men, most of whom had gathered about him in his outlaw life.

Following his subjugation of the Philistines, David first waged successful war against Moab and Ammon whose territory lay east of the lower Jordan and the Dead Sea. The Ammonites, in their distress, called for help from their Aramean or Syrian neighbors to the north. These, too, were defeated, mainly through the strong and daring leadership of Joab. Next David turned his attention southward and fought Edom. He reduced it to utter helplessness and submission. At last he came once more face to face with the desert-bordering Amalekites. The Amalekites were ancient arch-enemies of the Hebrews: they

[1] Shiloh had an interesting history as an early Israelite shrine. It lay in the territory of Ephraim, about ten miles south of Shechem. The Ark was brought there from Gilgal. See I Sam. I–IV; also Exodus XV:20 and XXXII:19; and Judges XXI:16–21.

[2] Their names were, Ishbaal, the Hachmonite, who had "swung his spear over eight hundred slain" at one time; Eleazar, the Ahohite, who once "stood up and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary and clave fast to the sword"; and Shammah, a Hararite of equal courage. See Kent's Historical Bible, Vol. II, p. 141.

had withstood Moses at Kadesh; they had brought sorrow to Samuel and a curse upon Saul; they had plundered Ziglag in the recent days when the Philistines had offered it to David as a city of asylum. The time of the visitation of judgment was now come. No mercy was shown them. David's strong army completely obliterated them beyond further trace in Old Testament history.

Of all the nations adjoining Palestine, the Phœnicians to the north alone escaped the sword of David's developing empire. They were a strong but peaceful commercial people, who sought the friendship of Israel. Since David did not, from personal choice, prefer war to peace, he respected this uncommon attitude and responded to it. He needed, for the building of his kingdom, not only Phœnicia's surplus of material supplies, but its friendly alliance. David was not only a great warrior-general; he was an even greater statesman and diplomat. He wished to build Israel into a great nation. Accordingly he welcomed even Phœnician leadership and instructorship in the arts and crafts, and the influences of its civilizing and broadening culture. He revealed his genius by the manner in which he was able to control this influence to his advantage, without incurring, to a serious extent, the danger of detrimental moral and religious consequences.

So successful were David's military operations, and so rapid and uninterrupted, as a consequence, was the territorial expansion of Israel, that the fond dream of a Hebrew kingdom was realized within the limit of a single generation. It became, indeed, the most renowned Hebrew empire in the ancient world. Its region extended eastward from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates valley, and southward from Damascus to the distant Gulf of Akabah.

Thus far our study has presented us with the heroic side of David's character. It has revealed to us his artistic talent, his noble youthful piety, his splendid courage, his generosity toward his enemies and his deep and sincere affection for his friends, his worthy ambition toward leadership, his wisdom and diplomacy, and the devoted and worthy gift of his service

in the building of the Hebrew state. These were the qualities which made him great. Through them David has made his appeal to the hero-worshiper of every race and age.

There is, however, another side to his nature. It is one which we would prefer to overlook. It presents us with scenes that make a dark and uninviting picture, from which it is easy to turn with disappointment, with humiliation, or contempt. Instead, it deserves our judicious study and sympathetic interpretation. David, though an extraordinary character, was a child of his age. His weakness, as well as his strength, was on the social side. His friendships were uniformly successful; his domestic life was, for the most part, an utter failure. In his magnanimity, his unaffected sincerity, and his finer spiritual intuitions, he was far in advance of his own time. He aspired to be a royal, yet humble servant of Jehovah, and he was, in fact, an unusually just and popular king. Nevertheless, in his court he lived as a grand monarch, and his family life was that of the typical Oriental home. His marriages seem, most of them, to have been contracted for reasons of state. Three of them are here deserving of note: the marriage to Michal, Saul's daughter; that to Abigail, the widow of Nabal; and the tragic marriage to Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, the Hittite. The social circumstances of the royal family made David's home life one of unhappiness. They created an atmosphere of rivalry and jealousy which resulted in crimes perpetrated by his sons, and brought him much anguish and bitter sorrow. His own sin against Uriah in the theft and marriage of Bathsheba is the one dark blot upon the record of his good name. The death of the child exacted from him the toll of suffering and grief with which he paid the penalty for his surrender to a base and unbridled passion. His genuine and deep repentance is the only ray of light that shines out of this dismal chapter in David's career.

David's domestic troubles at last assumed political proportions. Absalom, who had slain the criminal Amnon, his half-brother, was forced to make his escape to his mother's kindred in Geshur, in order to avoid the peril of blood-revenge at the hands of Amnon's brothers. During the two years of his ban-

ishment from the court of David he conceived and nurtured the ambition to seize his father's throne. After his return he sought occasion to be allowed to make his home at Hebron, where he won the favor of the people of Judah by an appeal to their tribal prejudices, and by means of slanderous insinuations regarding his father's qualifications for the royal office. David, trusting himself to be in possession of the good will of his subjects, for a time dwelt peacefully in Jerusalem. Suddenly the message came that Absalom had been proclaimed king at Hebron and was marching upon the capital city. David, completely overcome by surprise and grief, left Jerusalem, crossed the Jordan and found asylum among the loyal people of Mahanaim. Absalom entered the city, and, as a sign of open rebellion, took formal possession of the royal palace. David found a wise and trusted friend in Hushai, a Canaanite, whom he sent to the royal court to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, Absalom's political guide. The delay thus furthered gave David time to gather an army for the struggle. Hushai was successful. When at length Absalom crossed the Jordan in pursuit of his father, he was met by a well prepared army. The battle took place in the forests of Ephraim in the vicinity of Mahanaim. Absalom's army was defeated, and he himself slain. David's paternal grief and his expression of affection for an unworthy son were genuine and sincere, but somewhat untimely. They indeed very nearly cost him his kingdom. The men who had saved the day for him were not willing to be rewarded with the king's disaffection and reprimand. Accordingly, after a brief delay in order to insure the coöperation of Israel with Judah in the maintenance of the monarchy, David reëntered Jerusalem under military escort. He generously forgave all participants in the rebellion and was himself reinstated into universal popular favor.

A little later another rebellion broke out, this time in the North. It was occasioned by David's appointment of Amasa, one of the leaders of Absalom's rebel army, to take Joab's place as commanding general of the Israelite army. David had taken this step to conciliate the people of Judah and to encourage

them to favor his royal return. Led by Sheba, a Benjamite warrior, the northern tribes launched a movement of secession. The royal forces seemed for a time helpless to stem the tide of rebellion. Then Joab, sent to furnish auxiliary reinforcements, again appeared on the scene. He sought the first possible opportunity to meet Amasa, slew him outright, and took possession of the military command. Within an incredibly short time Sheba, having first been made a prisoner in the city which had served as his headquarters, was assassinated, and peace was again restored to the realm.

The closing years of David's life were filled with serious domestic problems. The most pressing of them was the choice of his successor to the throne. Although no law existed determining the royal succession, the Hebrew custom of giving the eldest son the first claim to property and family rights clearly pointed to the selection of Adonijah, who, since Absalom's death, was considered by an influential group of courtiers the rightful heir to the crown. An opposing party, however, consisting of sympathizers who gathered about Bathsheba, clearly favored Solomon, her son, for the kingship. As time passed the lines of opposition were clearly and sharply drawn. The royal house, with its attendant nobility, was divided against itself. Joab stood with Adonijah. So also did Abiathar, the priest. Justice, as well as custom, seemed plainly on his side. On the other hand, Nathan the prophet, Zadok the priest, and Benaiah, captain of the Six Hundred, openly preferred Solomon. David himself, now an old man and closely confined to the palace, had come, under Bathsheba's influence, secretly to favor her son. Whether or not the plan of Adonijah involved an open rebellion it is difficult to determine. His association with Joab, whose unscrupulousness knew no bounds, was sufficient to arouse David's suspicion. Adonijah's followers had no sooner met, at the appointed place in the valley of the Kidron for the feast which was to serve as the occasion of his anointment, than the party of Solomon, thoroughly prepared with a counter-plot, arranged a hasty interview with David. The king, giving his consent, ordered the immediate formation of a royal escort, and

himself accompanied Solomon down to the spring of Gihon, just outside the city walls and within hearing of the assembly of Adonijah's men, where, at the hands of Zadok the priest, Solomon was solemnly anointed and publicly proclaimed Israel's king. The conspiracy of Adonijah and his men came to a sudden end. The defeated prince fled to the temple, seeking refuge at the sacred altar where, according to Hebrew law, he remained under divine protection until the new king, happily satisfied with the outcome, decided temporarily to spare his life. With Solomon securely on the throne, and solemnly enjoined by his father to be faithful in his divine mission as the appointed ruler of his people, the history of David comes to a close.

Judged by the standards of his time, the greatness of David's achievements and character can scarcely be overestimated. Politically he stands out as Israel's most gifted and successful leader. He literally established the Hebrew nation and made it an empire. As a soldier and warrior he ranks among the first of Israel's heroes. His military genius was extraordinary. None among the Hebrew kings surpassed him in his gift of statesmanlike diplomacy; none had so great a power to realize the nation's dream. Later Hebrew history came to regard him as the ideal king.

On his personal side David was a man of certain unusually attractive qualities. At the center of his character was his magnanimity. He revealed a rare capacity for friendship. He knew how to forgive even an enemy. He was, to the extent of his knowledge and outlook upon life, consistently sincere and singularly free from arrogance and conceit. His weakness lay in his lack of self-discipline. It was the cause of most of his deep sorrow. He knew the suffering which is the inevitable consequence of sin; but he had learned also the way which, through the struggle of the soul and its experience of forgiveness, leads back to peace and to fellowship with God.

Of greatest significance to us is the fact that David did not permit his own experience to die with him, or to remain fruitless. He had the gift to pass it on to others and thus to enrich the world, and to make mankind his debtor for all time. The

Psalms which are the product of his spiritual and poetical genius are among the most favored writings of the Old Testament. They are works of art and breathe the very soul of religious devotion.

Not all of the Psalms in the Hebrew Psalter are the work of David. Some of them were written by unknown authors and at a very much later time. The complete Psalter is a collection or library of devotional songs compiled by a writer of the post-Exilic period in Hebrew history.[1] Many of them, however, are directly ascribed to David and reflect his own character and time. Others, though subsequently rewritten and given a new setting, contain the nucleus of his thought and the touch of his art.[2]

II. SOLOMON: THE GOLDEN ERA

Beginning with Solomon the Hebrew kingdom definitely takes its place among the nations of the world. Its international relationships now assume historical importance; its political destiny becomes involved in that of the surrounding national powers; its material prosperity reaches hitherto unparalleled heights, and its patriotism and religion now center definitely about the firmly established national capital.

Solomon succeeded his father to the throne about 970 B. C.[3] Important changes of events were at this time taking place among the empires of the East. Ancient Babylonia, long since waning in strength, was being gradually displaced by the Assyrian kingdom, already for centuries on the way to power but now beginning in an aggressive way to assume control of the

[1] The five divisions—Psalms 1–41; 42–72; 73–89; 90–106; and 107–150—in which the Psalter appears in our modern Bibles is of ancient Hebrew origin. It is supposed to have been made in imitation of the five books of the Pentateuch. This grouping may represent earlier collections or Psalters which, in the second century B. C., were brought together to form one complete literary body.

[2] That David was in reality a poet is clearly attested by later Biblical writers—See e. g., Amos VI:3–6—and by such poems as his lament over Saul and Jonathan, in II Samuel I:19–27, and his lament over Abner, in II Samuel III:33–34.

[3] Approximately the dates for the first three kings of Israel are the following: Saul 1050–1010; David 1010–970; Solomon 970–937.

Mesopotamian region.[1] The Hebrew kingdom, which two centuries later was to feel the grip of Assyria's iron hand, reached its state of maximum material development during a brief interval of Assyrian decline. Solomon's rule thus began auspiciously. It offered him an opportune time to carry to completion his father's plan for the consolidation and expansion of Israel's empire. After a generation of warfare the kingdom had come to be at peace with its neighbors and within its own borders. In order that peace might be followed by prosperity, further national leadership was necessary: first in the promotion of civil government, and of commerce and international alliances; second in the pursuit of those moral and spiritual ideals which by this time had come to be regarded as Israel's treasured and especially entrusted heritage. The task confronting the nation was to insure simultaneous and equal development of its material and spiritual resources. Solomon's success in the establishment of a grand monarchy was phenomenal. He made his own age the Golden Age in the history of the Hebrew people. His political leadership, compared with that of David and viewed in the light of its consequences, was less conspicuous. Religiously the contribution of Solomon, despite his temple building enterprise, has been somewhat overestimated. The Biblical historian, deeply conscious of the significance of Israel's spiritual life as a factor in the development and perpetuity of the nation, came naturally to have a high regard for the temple which stood as an imposing symbol of this religious factor and need.

A close study of Solomon's life reveals certain contrasting elements necessary to be considered in forming an estimate of his career. There is, on the one hand, the record of the young king's piety, his sagaciousness, the noble purpose by which

[1] Assyria's authentic history begins with about 1500 B. C. Beginning with c. 1300 B. C., under Shalmaneser I, the empire made a decided advance. The first outstanding king of Assyria was Tiglath Pileser I, who ruled c. 1100 B. C. About a century later, i. e., 1000 B. C., the empire experienced a temporary decline. This was during the time of David in Israel. Then, a little later, under Tiglath Pileser II, c. 970 B. C.—the year of Solomon's accession—Assyria entered upon a great period of expansion. By 745 B. C., under Tiglath Pileser IV, contemporary of Jeroboam II in Israel, the Assyrian empire had come into undisputed control of the eastern world.

he is actuated in his building of the temple. On the other hand, we are presented with a picture of a young autocrat: ruthless in his disposal of his early rivals; indifferent, in his intent upon royal magnificence, to the growing spirit of popular revolt; polygamous; idolatrous, and, in fact, clearly lacking the deeper wisdom of which, according to popular tradition, he was accounted to be the paragon. The early historian was a prophet who judged Solomon by the ethical standards of a subsequent time. The late writer, interested chiefly in Israel's religious institutions, idealized him as their noblest patron and founder. Somewhere between these two views—the earlier realistic, and the later idealistic—is his true portrait. Solomon was religious, sagacious, ambitious; he was sensuous, selfish, and proud. He was the great son of a greater father. His sceptre was held in awe among contemporary nations, but there is no evidence that he was loved by his own people. He came to the throne by royal succession, and not, as did his father, through popular choice. There were in his time no crises of which he could prove himself to be the hero. No deeds of outstanding courage or nobility are credited to him. For purposes of character building his early life in the royal court was a handicap, not an advantage.

Solomon, after securing his throne against domestic rivals, set his hand to the accomplishment of a three-fold purpose. The first was to expand and strengthen the empire through foreign alliances, and by means of a series of fortifications erected at certain points of greatest danger against foreign invasions or civil rebellion. The second was to increase the revenues of the kingdom through the development of foreign commerce and an elaborate system of domestic taxation.

Finally, as a consummate achievement, he planned the undertaking of a building project which was to represent to the nation and its allies both the royal splendor and the religious ideals of the Hebrew people. The immediate beginning of this ambitious task was made imperative by pressing circumstances and events. The Edomites, who had been thoroughly subdued by David and held in check during his reign, were again rising

in revolt under the leadership of Hadad, an escaped prince, who had found in the death of Joab an opportunity to strike for the liberty of his people. Solomon was no man of war. Though supplied with a large standing army, including a newly introduced company of horses and war chariots, he could not bring Hadad to terms, and was forced to let Edom go. This was, so far as Israel was concerned, a bad beginning. Edom's example was followed, after a brief interval, by Moab, and again Solomon was forced to accede. Then came Damascus, which, under the able leadership of Rezon, regained its freedom. This event resulted in the establishment of the kingdom of Syria with which, for nearly two centuries after Solomon's death, Israel was destined to be engaged in periodic and deadly conflict.

Renewed treaties negotiated between Solomon and Hiram of Phœnicia were shortly followed by a series of royal diplomatic marriages, the most notable of which was that with an Egyptian princess for whom Solomon later built a special palace in his own court,—doubtless with the revenue which came to him from the queen's dowry in the form of the ancient Canaanite city of Gezer. Next he carried out his plan of national fortification. Gezer, with Baalath, a little to the north, and Beth-horon to the south were strengthened to guard the western frontier. In the north, close to the marshes of the upper Jordan, he fortified Hozar; in the south, not far from his father's former outlaw stronghold of Ziglag, he built Tamar. Jerusalem itself was further fortified by towered walls and garrisoned by army charioteers.

The required revenue for this program of national development and defense was secured from two sources: domestic taxation and international commerce. For the first of these Solomon devised a plan to suit his own convenience and need. Without a careful recognition of the ancient tribal divisions in Israel, he districted the whole territory of Palestine into twelve administrative areas, over each of which he placed an officer of administration, whose duty it was to provide, from the resources of his area, for the king's maintenance for the period of a month. In addition he resorted to the ancient policy of levying a tax of

enforced labor upon the resident subjects of the land, beginning first with the descendants of the primitive inhabitants of Palestine who, since the settlement of Canaan, had continued to live peaceably by the side of their Hebrew conquerors.

Next a representative number of Israelites from the various districts were subjected to intermittent periods of serfdom in order to replenish the rapidly diminishing resources of the royal treasury. Finally the burden of taxation was made complete by a direct assessment of the people for the maintenance of the luxurious royal palace. Even these measures, exorbitant as they were, did not suffice to furnish the necessary funds for the realization of the young monarch's dreams of magnificence. More wealth in the form of national income was needed. Solomon, whose real genius seems to have been a masterful gift for organization and exploitation, found a way to secure it. The needed help came through the inauguration of a system of overland and maritime commerce. Equipped with loans from Hiram of Tyre, and a small fleet prepared for him by the shipbuilders of Phœnicia, he opened negotiations of trade with Arabia from a seaport on the northern extremity of the Gulf of Akabah. From the land of Ophir his seamen brought gold and silver, and such hitherto unknown articles of luxury as precious stones, sandalwood, apes, and peacocks. These commercial expeditions brought Solomon untold riches. He met the cost for their upkeep by paying Hiram, his creditor, with the gift of twenty Galilean cities. Thus he gave added evidence of his unique ability to meet so practical and embarrassing an emergency as a financial debt.

The venture by which Solomon is best known, and for which in after years he gained a deserved and lasting reputation, was his magnificent building enterprise. It had as its goal the building of the great national temple.[1] By means of his building pro-

[1] There is a Biblical record of the building of three temples during the course of Israel's history: (1) the temple of Solomon, built about 950 B. C. and destroyed by the invading army of Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B. C.; (2) Zerubbabel's temple, erected by the Jews shortly after their return from the Babylonian exile and completed in 516 B. C.; (3) the temple of Herod the Great, built in the eighteenth year of his reign, i. e., about 20 B. C.

gram he carried out the policy of national centralization begun by David in his selection of Jerusalem as the royal city. Solomon undertook the task actuated by a dual motive: he sought through it to satisfy his pride and innate love for splendor; and he desired thereby to give fit expression to the deeply religious nature of his own people. That he was himself a man capable of noble religious sentiment there is no reason to doubt. His dedicatory prayer, though preserved for us in the words of a later historical writer, is worthy of the occasion of joyful solemnity which crowned the completion of the great sanctuary.[1] It was a great moment for both the king and his waiting worshiping people. As in the days of old under the shadow of Sinai, God was speaking to the nation, calling it to a renewal of its pledge of faithfulness and spiritual service. It is evident, however, that practical considerations weighed heavily in the balances of Solomon's judgment. This is noticeable in the relatively small part of time required for the actual completion of the temple, as compared with the more elaborate plans and expenditure both of time and money in the construction of the royal palace. Altogether the period of building lasted twenty years. Of these seven were given to the temple and thirteen to the remaining buildings which constituted the king's residence. These buildings were five in number. They were surrounded by a great outside wall. The space within this wall, not occupied by the buildings, was known as the Great Court. At its southern end, at which was the city entrance, this court opened immediately into the House of the Forest of Lebanon, which received its name from the forty-five large cedar pillars that stood in three rows and formed a spacious hall for the gathering of assemblies. Next to the north were two buildings forming a unit: the Porch of Pillars which served as a waiting-room for visitors to the royal court; and the Hall of Judgment, where the king sat in hearing upon legal cases and received distinguished visitors. Beyond these, within private walls forming another court, was the royal palace, together with a special

[1] See I Kings VIII:22–53. Compare with it Solomon's prayer at the beginning of his reign, as recorded in I Kings III:5–15.

house for Solomon's Egyptian princess. Finally, at the upper end of the outer court, and accessible through three open gateways, was the inner temple court. It was paved throughout and served as a place of assembly for social and religious discourse. The temple, facing eastward, stood at the west end of this inner court. Directly in front of it stood the large altar of burnt offering; and, about midway between the two, the great brazen sea, resting upon twelve oxen, and furnishing water for the temple ablutions. The temple [1] itself, probably patterned after Phœnician or Egyptian architecture, was divided into three parts: (1) an outer ascending hallway or porch; (2) an antechamber, called the Hekal, or holy place; and (3) an inner sanctuary or shrine, called Debur, or most holy place. At the entrance to the porch stood two pillars, the work of Hiram, a renowned artisan: the one on the right was called Jachin, the one on the left Boaz. The whole building was of rectangular proportions. It was sixty cubits [2] long, twenty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high. The holy place contained three articles of historical interest: the altar of incense, the table of the shewbread, and the golden candlesticks. The most holy place, built as a perfect cube, was without windows and without furnishings, except the sacred ark of the covenant, which in Samuel's day had rested in Shiloh, and which, following the conquest of the Philistines, had been brought by David to Jerusalem. Above the Ark, hovering with outspread wings, were the cherubim, two angelic figures representing the presence of Jehovah. There in the darkness, without image, in the secrecy of his own appointed abode dwelt God. The shrine aptly symbolized the common experience that life tends always to lose itself in the mys-

[1] The historical sources of information regarding the building of Solomon's temple are three. I Kings VI–VII is usually taken by Biblical students as the basic record. It contains, however, certain textual imperfections when compared with the later Levitical and more idealized account in II Chron. II–V, and with Ezekiel XL–XLII, which is the prophet's picture of the temple as he visualized it in its restoration. The most outstanding contribution to the study of this ancient temple was made by Stade. See his plan of the royal buildings as slightly modified by Benzinger in Hastings Dict. of the Bible, Vol. IV, p. 695.

[2] A cubit is approximately twenty inches. This would make the building about one hundred feet long, fifty feet high, and thirty-three feet wide.

tery of the unseen. The presence of God was made realizable through the treasured symbolism of the priestly sacrifice and the orderly and uplifting devotional ritual.

Historically the building of the temple marked a transition in the religious life of the Hebrew people. From a group of nomadic tribes Israel had become a nation and a temporarily united kingdom. Shepherd customs had been displaced by those peculiar to agriculture. Conquest for exploitation had yielded to an orderly material development through the avenues of trade. The plain rude shelter of the tent had been exchanged for the permanent dwelling-place of the home. The oasis amid the sands had become, as it were, the magic thriving city, with its busy streets, its thronged market places, and its steady concourse of tradesmen and visitors from distant lands.

The change thus brought about in the social life of the now thoroughly nationalized Hebrews was destined to have its marked influence upon their culture and religion. Through contact with surrounding nations, some of them of a comparatively more advanced civilization, they gradually became a less individualistic and a more consolidated people. The growth of their national consciousness marked the normal halfway stage through which vigorous races always pass in their social and cultural development from tribalism to internationalism.

Israel was at last a true state with its own recognized place under the sun. It was a great free people with noble historical and religious traditions. The magnificence of Solomon's kingship symbolized its consciousness of strength, and the temple which he had erected was the socialized expression of its religious faith.

A developing civilization is known by its increasing complexity. This fact became apparent when, side by side with the growing spirit of popular freedom, a tendency toward social class distinction began to assert itself, giving rise to the spirit of tyranny and despotism which cast a shadow over the closing years of Solomon's reign. The men, who had once fought for the cause of liberty and won, were in turn made the victims of their own king's lust for power and magnificence. His subju-

gation of the masses by means of exorbitant burdens of taxation ran counter to the persistent democratic spirit of Israel's earlier history. Such plain injustice could not long be tolerated. Though held in check during his life time, the struggle for social and political freedom aroused the common people of the empire to a new realization of the dangers as well as the advantages of the Hebrew kingship. This was particularly the case among the patriots who lived in the northern territory of Palestine. Never intimately associated with the South, which laid a special claim to the national capital within its borders, this region offered a fertile soil for the broadly strewn seeds of rebellion.

Among the leaders opposed to Solomon's tyrannous rule were the representatives of the advancing school of the prophets. These men were among the greatest patriots of the Hebrew nation. Their chief task, however, was to be the guardians of Israel's faith. Their heroism in times of the nation's subsequent crises was extraordinary. Greater still were the religious truths which they proclaimed and which made them heroic. If forced, by fateful circumstances, to a choice of alternatives, they declared themselves willing to sacrifice the nation's material prosperity and, if need be, its political future in the interest of the preservation of its moral idealism and its spiritual life. But for their services, it is doubtful if enough of Israel's religion would have survived the vicissitudes of Hebrew history to produce the New Testament era, and, through it, to convey its gift of blessing to the modern world.

Solomon was not irreligious. He seems, on the contrary, to the full extent of his nature, to have been a man of reverent piety. But his chief interest lay not in religion but in politics. His religious acts, like his marriages, were mainly matters of statecraft and diplomacy. The Biblical record shows him to have been in principle a religious cosmopolitan. It was not enough for him that Jehovah should change His place of residence from Hareb-Sinai to Jerusalem, there to become the patron deity of the royal city and of the nation. The hospitality of Zion was not limited to the God of the Hebrews; it was extended also

to the lesser deities of the surrounding foreign powers, in order that the king's homage to these gods might give the seal of friendship to his foreign alliances.[1] In general, if to a lesser extent, Solomon accepted the principle of polytheism as he did that of polygamy. Both served the purpose of the consolidation and protection of the Hebrew empire. Nationally interpreted, his policy may have been that of launching a movement directed toward religious syncretism. If so, his ideal of merging all the leading and openly conflicting cults in the land into a single national religion was not realized. The danger of a national abandonment of Jehovah was at this time very slight. The rank and file of Israel's population was capable of a spiritual fidelity which exceeded even its loyalty to the state. The supreme passion of every true Hebrew was, as it had been from the beginning, for the welfare of the soul. The Bible itself is the best evidence of the increasing development of this racial genius. It is its theocentric character, its unrestrained absorption in the things of the spirit, its noble God-intoxication, that elevates and transforms Hebrew history into universal sacred scripture. Israel's loyalty to Jehovah was augmented, not lessened, by Solomon's building of the temple.

Nevertheless a gradual change in popular religious conceptions was inevitable. Loyalty to Jehovah did not prevent the possibility of attributing to Him many of the traits and characteristics of the gods into whose territory He, together with His people, had migrated. Religious thought among the Hebrews, as among other peoples, had followed the natural order of its social and economic development. In the earliest days Jehovah had been the God of the desert and of Israel's primitive shepherd life. At a subsequent period He had become the Lord of Hosts of Joshua's conquering army.[2] Then, for a time, during Israel's colonial days, He had been worshiped as Jehovah-

[1] I Kings XI:7 explicitly states that Solomon built a sanctuary for Chemosh, the god of Moab, and for Moloch, the god of the Ammonites. The latter, it is known, could generally be appeased only by the offering of human sacrifice.

[2] This title, Lord of Hosts, or Lord God of Hosts, appears most frequently in Hebrew history from the Exodus to the period of Omri, king of Israel, i. e., from c. 1200 to 850 B. C.

Baal, Lord of Canaan and guardian of its fruitful fields. With the establishment of the kingdom He had become the sovereign God of the Hebrew nation. The stage of the popular conception of advanced tribal or national deities is known in the history of religion as the stage of Henotheism. It represents the period in the historical development of a people when the conceptions of religion and patriotism are effectually blended or interfused. It was at this period that Israel found itself at the time of Solomon's death. The loftier ideas of Jehovah as the God of all nations, of individual and social righteousness, of immediate and uninterrupted spiritual companionship, and, in the supremest sense, of infinite love and universal fatherhood, were mysteries that as yet had not been unfolded. Their revelation was the work of succeeding generations of Israel's spiritual teachers and leaders, beginning with the period of the prophets and culminating in the sacred character and ministry of Jesus.

In addition to his achievement as a statesman and builder, Solomon was a patron of literature and culture. His practical sagacity and artistic tastes were universally acknowledged. Under his influence men gifted in writing were encouraged to begin the production of a national literature. He himself came gradually to be accredited with the authorship of several books which, in the course of time, found their way into the Biblical canon. They are the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. We have already learned that Proverbs is, like the book of Psalms, not an individual production but a collection of writings. As Psalms is an anthology, so Proverbs is an encyclopedia or library of practical wisdom. Many of its wise sayings were doubtless Solomon's; others owe their origin to his encouraging patronage; still others are the additions of later philosophic minds. Altogether the book represents the practical and religious philosophy of more than five successive centuries. Ecclesiastes differs from Proverbs in several important particulars. It is an individual literary production and has a single specific literary theme. Proverbs deals with concrete moral problems of daily living; Ecclesiastes confronts the reader with the more perplexing question of the purpose and ultimate value of human

life. The writer's disturbed and sadly contemplative outlook into the future, as well as the peculiarities of his style, may be regarded as evidence that Ecclesiastes belongs to a comparatively late period in Hebrew history. Its dedication to Solomon was both natural and appropriate. It represents a view of life such as very likely may have been his at the end of his prosperous but comparatively unhappy career. The Song of Songs is an Oriental poem which fits very satisfactorily into Solomon's life. It has the appearance of having been written about Solomon rather than by him.

PART III

THE AGE OF PROPHECY

CHAPTER XI

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

With the establishment of the Kingdom of Israel, Old Testament history definitely emerges from the twilight of a remote antiquity and comes out into the clear day of well authenticated world events and facts. Modern Biblical archæology has lifted the curtain which for many centuries shrouded in obscurity the life of ancient races and peoples. It has helped to make the Bible a new and widely open book; large portions of scripture, hitherto obscure, have thereby been helped to yield their exact historical and religious meaning. Its chief contribution has been toward the presentation of Israel's life and religious institutions in the light of contemporary history. The Hebrew people did not rise to eminence in solitude. Without contact with other tribes and nations they could have developed neither the natural nor the moral strength requisite to greatness. It is with the nature and the significant consequences of this contact that the period of our present chapter has to do. The centuries which comprise the period were the greatest in Old Testament history. They were not centuries of outstanding political or national progress. On the contrary, they marked Israel's and Judah's downfall as Hebrew states. But herein lay their special importance: it was in the fateful process of national disintegration which they effected that Israel faced and won the spiritual battle for the preservation of its faith. The men who led the way in this noble struggle, and thereby enriched the world by their extraordinary religious teachings, were the prophets. To them subsequent history owes a debt which no generation can repay. They were not only the saviours of Israel's faith, but the originators of a new movement in Hebrew history, which later came to culmination in the birth and establishment of

Christianity. Our aim of calling this second period in Hebrew history the period of the prophets is therefore fully justified. For the Hebrew people who endured and survived the long and bitter test it was a period of outstanding productivity and rich spiritual experience. One of Israel's later poets well depicted it, in its progress from beginning to end, in these treasured words:

"He that goeth forth weeping bearing seed for sowing
Shall doubtless come again with joy bearing his sheaves with him."

I. ISRAEL AND JUDAH

The history of the northern kingdom, or Kingdom of Israel, covers two centuries, beginning with Solomon's death and ending with the fall of Samaria.[1] Its trend, which involves also the fortunes of the southern kingdom of Judah, may be outlined in this manner: (1) A half century of bitter conflict between Israel and Judah, followed by an equal period of friendly alliance between the two states through royal intermarriage; (2) another half century of military disturbance through warfare with Damascus, followed by almost as many years of unparalleled prosperity for both Israel and Judah during the reigns of Jeroboam II and Uzziah.[2] The kingdom inherited by Rehoboam, Solomon's son, carried in itself the seeds of its own disruption. Solomon had himself planted them and prepared the soil for their germination. He did so by means of his royal extravagances and his developing autocratic temper. The long-separated tribes of Israel had only lately consented to a centralized form of government, and they had done so under the conciliatory and diplomatic leadership of David. He had been well aware of the loosely cemented tie which bound the two major groups of Hebrew tribes together under his own sovereignty. His friendly negotiations with Abner, the cousin of

[1] Solomon's reign ended in 937; the fall of Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, occurred in 722.

[2] Damascus was the capital of the Arameans. They are also known to Biblical readers as Syrians, the name given them by the English Authorized Version. In Old Testament history Aram included northern Mesopotamia, northern Syria, and large portions of Arabia.

Saul, and his transfer of the national capital from Hebron to Jerusalem were carried out primarily in the interests of inter-tribal solidarity. From the beginning the northern tribes had, for the most part, fought their own battles. They had tilled their own fertile soil and established their independent religious sanctuaries. Together with their sense of isolation from the people of the south, they had developed a vigorous and self-assertive democratic spirit. They accordingly looked with dissatisfaction upon Rehoboam who had entered upon the rulership through succession within a family of the distant southern tribe of Judah.

When therefore Rehoboam, rejecting the wise counsel of the elder statesmen of his court, and eager to satisfy his own youthful autocratic zeal, determined to burden the people with an additional weight of extortionate taxation, they openly rebelled. The crisis thus precipitated aroused Rehoboam to action. Again, however, he chose the wrong course. Instead of adopting a plan of conciliation, he determined upon coercion. Submission by the people of the north was out of the question; the only alternative was secession. The man of the hour was Jeroboam, an able and valiant leader. He had at one time, by royal appointment, held a position of political responsibility, but suspicion of his disloyalty had caused him to be banished to exile in Egypt. Rehoboam's folly opened the way to his opportunity. At the invitation of his compatriots he returned to be their chieftain and commander. Rehoboam's threat to chastise his subjects for their insubordination was met by the prompt rallying call:

> "What share have we in David?
> We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
> To your tents, O Israel!
> Now see to thine own house, O David!"

The sudden disruption of the Hebrew kingdom dealt a fateful blow to the political future of Israel. There were now two weak states where there had once been a strong and united empire. The house of Israel was divided against itself. The outcome of this tragic circumstance was not difficult to foresee.

It meant, first, civil war, then subjugation at the hands of a foreign conqueror and, finally, the disintegration and complete dissolution of the Hebrew nation. The foreign power, greedy for prey, was already at hand; it was the empire of Assyria which just then was entering upon its third historical period of expansion.[1] The prophets, soon to arise within the nation at the call of its need, were to look upon Israel's future humiliation as the fateful, but providentially chastening consequence of its sin. Yet somehow the earliest of them could not themselves take the position which might have prevented the rebellion. The strong democratic spirit in them was inseparable from the pure and simple faith of Israel's desert and pastoral life.

Throughout the history of their movement—which was coincident with the remaining centuries of the Hebrew nation's existence—the prophets fought for the preservation of this priceless spiritual heritage. They consistently espoused the cause of the free soul of Israel even at the cost of its political decline. They held it to be better for the Hebrew people—since they had not been able to live together in tribal brotherhood—to walk the wearisome way of suffering alone, struggling through to the survival of their spiritual genius, at the loss of all else, than to preserve or build an empire upon a false religious foundation.

The division of the Hebrew kingdom gave the ten tribes of the North the advantage. They were in possession of by far the more fertile territory of Palestine. Jeroboam, who had been made king, lost no time in restoring order and establishing civil government in the land. First he fortified the ancient city of Shechem, situated in the beautiful valley between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, and made it the first capital of the northern kingdom. Then he built shrines at Bethel in the South and Dan in the North and made them the religious sanctuaries of the people. The golden calves, to whom altars were erected at these shrines, had, according to Semitic custom, a merely symbolical meaning. The prophetic historian of a later day, probably a resi-

[1] The years of this period of Assyrian growth were those between 911 and 782 B.C.

dent of Jerusalem, the sacred city of the southern kingdom, looked upon the sanctuaries at Dan and Bethel as shrines of idolatry. It was, we may assume, for good reasons that he attributed Israel's later downfall to the naturalistic form of Jehovah worship conducted under the patronage of the king. Judged by the circumstances of the time, Jeroboam's reign was one of great difficulties. Apparently he dealt with them as one who sought the welfare of his people. The forty years which followed are of only passing interest to the Biblical reader. They were years of bloody revolution, characterized by the assassination of kings, frequent changes of dynasties, and by aggressive warfare with the rival kingdom of Judah. During these forty years four kings occupied the throne of Israel; so revolutionary were the times that three of them were the originators of independent dynasties. Nadab, Jeroboam's son, had reigned but two years when he fell at the hand of Baasha, a leading conspirator from the tribe of Issachar. Baasha's reign of twenty-four years is remembered chiefly for its cruel wars with Judah. These wars became an event of great consequence when Asa, king of Judah, hard pressed by the invader, called for help upon Benhadad of Syria. This gave the Syrians, or Arameans, an opportunity for aggressive warfare against Israel, which was prolonged until both nations, through loss of man power, fell a ready prey to the oncoming army of Assyria. The evil consequences of Baasha's murderous rule were visited upon his own son. Elah, after occupying the throne two years, was assassinated during a drunken feast in the royal palace at Tirzah, and Zimri, the assassin, ruled in his stead. His power as monarch lasted but seven days. The army of Israel, under the command of Omri, surrounded the temporary capital at Tirzah. Zimri, discovering himself a prisoner, set fire to his own palace and perished with it.

With Ormi, who now became king, a change of fortune overtook Israel. The diplomacy and statesmanship which characterize his twelve years' reign entitle him to the honor of being called the David of the northern kingdom. His leadership led him to a fourfold achievement: (1) He saved Israel from humiliating subjection to Syria, and conducted a success-

ful campaign of warfare against Moab; (2) he established relations of diplomatic friendship with Phœnicia, by means of which he found an open gateway to the sea and an opportunity for commerce with the nearer nations along the Mediterranean; (3) he likewise won and cultivated the friendship of Judah, which a generation later led to intermarriage between the royal families; (4) he took the first step, through the purchase of the hill of Samaria, toward the building of the northern kingdom's national capital.[1]

II. ISRAEL AND SYRIA

Ahab, the son and successor of Omri, profited by and added to his father's achievement. He built and beautified the capital city Samaria; through his marriage with Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Tyre, he cemented Israel's friendship with Phœnicia; by means of the marriage of his daughter Athaliah with Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, he succeeded in bringing the two Hebrew kingdoms into intimate mutual contact. Ahab's most significant act, however, was his heroic struggle to free the kingdom of Israel from Syrian domination. Benhadad's boastful threat and the Syrian attack were met by Israel's sturdy resistance. These were followed by an open battle between the two forces at Aphek, a locality east of the sea of Galilee.[2] The victory was complete, and Benhadad sought mercy at the hand of Ahab. Ahab was generous and gave him his freedom. This act met the strong disapproval of the zealous young patriot-prophets who were just then coming into prominence.

[1] Valuable information concerning the character and military campaigns of Omri is preserved for us by the inscriptions of the so-called Moabite Stone. It was found in Moab in 1868. It is now in the Louvre, Paris. According to this archæological record Omri held a prominent place in contemporary history. The stone was set up by king Mesha of Moab in gratitude to Chemosh, the nation's god, for Moab's deliverance from a forty-year period of subjugation to Israel. Another monument belonging to the period of one generation later (c. 842 B. C.) is of equal interest in our present study. It is known as Shalmaneser's Black Obelisk. It specifically refers to "Jehu the son of Omri, king of Israel." It was erected by Shalmaneser III about 825 B. C., and is now in the British Museum in London.

[2] The Old Testament name for the lake of Galilee was the Sea of Chinnereth.

They regarded it as bad diplomacy, as a display of magnanimity without penetrative insight into future consequences. Very likely, however, it was prompted by a serious circumstance to which we have no direct reference in Old Testament history. According to an Assyrian record preserved for us in the so-called Monolith Inscription of Shalmaneser III, Israel and Syria joined forces with other nations in the Lebanon region to meet the invading army of the Assyrian empire which, by the middle of the ninth century B. C., had succeeded in establishing its claim upon extensive territory west of the Euphrates. At the battle of Karkar, on the river Orontes, in 854 B. C., Shalmaneser's army met the coalition of Palestinian forces which halted him in his attempt to conquer the land. It did so again in 849 B. C., and once more three years after that. It was not until in 842 B. C., during the reign of Jehu, that Israel, together with Syria and Phœnicia, was forced to pay tribute to the Assyrian monarch.[1] Ahab was sorely repaid for his mercy toward Benhadad. Following the first successful issue of the Assyrian crisis, the Syrian king broke the promise he had made to Ahab following the battle of Aphek. He had pledged the return of certain Israelite cities which previously had fallen into Syrian hands. Most notable among them was Ramoth-Gilead. This city was famous in Hebrew national tradition, and patriotic sentiment prompted Ahab's attempt to secure its recapture. Joined by Jehoshaphat of Judah, but against the advice of Micaiah, the prophet, he went into battle. Though amply disguised, he was detected and mortally wounded by a Syrian archer. His death kept Ramoth-Gilead in Syrian hands.

The closing chapters of I Kings present an interesting example of composite history, made up of two originally independent but parallel narratives. One is the account of the brilliant political career of Ahab; the other is the accumulated group of stories which gathered around the noble and dramatic figure of the prophet Elijah. From these latter interpolated stories we get a quite different impression of Ahab's personality and character. He is here seen through the eyes of a patriot-

[1] See index for reference to Shalmaneser's Black Obelisk.

prophet who does not judge him outwardly, but inwardly and ethically. Measured by the high moral standards and spiritual ideals of later prophetism he is found guilty of the promotion of two great evils: arrogant political and social despotism, and gross religious idolatry.

ELIJAH

As in the days of the conquest, Israel was again facing a great crisis in its religious history. Contact with foreign nations, by means of which it had risen to fame and power, threatened its moral degeneration. Israel's faith had lost its simplicity and was fast becoming a popular naturalistic cult. The man who appeared to recall his people to the purer worship of former days was Elijah the Tishbite, a desert prophet from the region of Gilead. His coming was interpreted as a divine visitation, as a voice from the bygone days of Israel's wilderness life, as the heralded approach of a new prophetic era. In Hebrew history he is significantly designated as the divinely commissioned champion of the religion of Jehovah against the Canaanitish-Phœnician cult of Baal. Baalism among the early Canaanites had been a primitive and sensuous form of nature worship. It was the religion of an agricultural people, and was in essence nothing other than a deification of the creative principle of life. Baal was generally represented by a young bullock, the symbol of strength and fertility. Sacrifices from the flocks and grains were offered to him, accompanied by ritualistic forms of worship, often of a morally degrading type. Drunkenness and sacred prostitution were common vices among the devotees of this cult. With the development of civilization and the growth of foreign commerce, its influence was widespread. Israel's contact and subsequent friendly relations with Phœnicia exposed the Hebrew people anew to its dangers.

A sudden crisis was precipitated by Ahab's marriage to Jezebel, daughter of the king of Tyre. Jezebel was a zealous enthusiast for the spread of Baalism and her influence was dominant in the royal court. Ahab was a moral opportunist and

apparently without marked religious convictions. A vital and heroic faith in the God of the Hebrew fathers was needed to meet and overcome the strongly entrenched cult. Elijah was a personality of such faith. His message had the culminative effect of a series of brief, bald, and dramatic public utterances. According to the narrative in the closing chapters of I Kings it centered upon three appearances of the prophet at Ahab's court. In the first he announced the prolongation of the drought which was very shortly to hold the whole land in the grip of a deadly famine. There would be no rain except by the word of Jehovah who was Himself the God of Canaan's fertile soil. The second scene represents Ahab as having gone out to meet Elijah in order personally to bring him to justice for the responsibility which the prophet had assumed with regard to the famine. Elijah faces the king squarely and challenges him to an open contest which is to take place at the seaside on Mt. Carmel.

The episode which transpires on the mountain top overlooking the Mediterranean is clearly a dramatic representation of a long continued struggle for supremacy in Israel between the prophets of Jehovah and the devotees of Baal. Popular opinion and feeling were with Elijah, but Jezebel's influence among the nobles at the court and throughout the realm was strong. Elijah's momentary victory was deserved. Truth was vindicated, but evil had not thereby been vanquished. To save himself from the threat of the infuriated queen he fled southward toward Beersheba, and from there to Horeb-Sinai, the ancestral holy mountain. Here, while brooding over the cause of his apparent failure, alone amid wind and earthquake and fire, he heard, with an inner ear, the voice of God. It delivered to him the message of a new divine order. He learned that truth, as God willed it, was to prevail, not by outward signs of might or momentary demonstrations of overpowering emotion, but by means of the orderly processes and through the use of the established agencies of a socially organized and civilly governed society.

The simple individualism of Israel's early desert days was past. Life for it had grown complex, and the coercive will of

the state was often found to be a hindrance to the free course of individual action. Movements of reform must therefore begin by enlisting the services of men of social responsibility and the gift of leadership. Elijah found such men in Elisha, his successor to the prophetic office, and in Hazael and Jehu who after a brief interval became the kings of Syria and Israel. The consequences for good and evil which followed the adoption of Elijah's new program were made apparent in the next period of Israel's history.

The final open appearance of Elijah was at the time of his encounter with Ahab in Naboth's vineyard. The king had gone out to inspect the property for the possession of which he had committed both theft and murder. The prophet met him at the gate with these words of rebuke: "Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?" Ahab could only exclaim: "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Elijah's answer was direct and brief: "I have."

Elijah's place in Old Testament history is second only to that of Moses. His influence as a prophet of spiritual religion and social reform extends far into the pages of the New Testament. He was the forerunner of the later movement familiarly known as the new prophetism, the outstanding representatives of which were Amos and Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Deutero-Isaiah.

History has little to record concerning Ahaziah, Ahab's son and successor to the throne. The Biblical writer pauses only long enough to say that he worshiped Baal and provoked Jehovah to anger. The statement also is added that he met with a serious bodily injury, concerning the recovery from which he made inquiry of Baal-Zebub the god of Ekron. The reproof which he received was the last public utterance of Elijah.

The principal event in the reign of Joram, Ahaziah's brother and successor, was the resubjugation of the Moabites. It appears from the record of the Moabite Stone that Moab had previously come under the control of Israel during the reign of Ormi, and had been held in subjugation thereafter for a period of forty years. Then had come its deliverance under the able

leadership of king Mesha. Now, however, king Joram, with the help of Jehoshaphat of Judah, determined upon regaining possession of this valuable region of upland country east of the Dead Sea. The attack, delayed by a lack of water supply, was made from the south. In anticipation of the terrible consequences of defeat, the king of Moab built an altar on the wall of his fortress and publicly sacrificed his own son to arouse the pity of Chemosh, the national god. Joram and Jehoshaphat, moved with pity and fear at the tragic spectacle, withdrew their forces and returned home.

THE REVOLUTION OF JEHU

The man to whom Elijah entrusted his uncompleted task was a young plowman of central Palestine. Elijah had himself been a man of the desert, unacquainted with the complexities and social traditions of an advanced state of civilization. Elisha was a man of culture, a leader, and a diplomatist. The two prophets, however, shared the one essential qualification for their sacred office—a passionate zeal for justice and loyalty to Jehovah.

At the appointed time, probably after previous understanding and arrangement, Israel's program for the eradication of Baalism was put into action. It took the form of a revolution directed against the royal house of Ahab. Its reformatory principles were those of the newly risen prophetic party.[1] The time chosen was the occasion of another unsuccessful battle against Syria for the recovery of Ramoth-Gilead. Joram had returned to Jezreel to seek recovery from the wound he had received on the field of battle. Jehu, the commander of Israel's army, remained at Ramoth-Gilead. There he was met by a young messenger, a representative of the prophetic guild, who, after a brief interview, anointed him king of northern Israel. The mil-

[1] The prophetic guild, now actually coming into power, was probably made up of such devoted followers of Jehovah as the Rechabites (see Jeremiah XXXV) and the Nazarites, who were strongly opposed to the degrading influences of the Canaanite civilization.

itary leaders gave their consent. Further developments followed with rapidity. Safeguarding carefully the secrecy of his intent, he mounted his chariot and set out for Jezreel and Samaria to lay claim to the title of kingship. Joram, recognizing Jehu by his furious driving, met him at the ill-fated vineyard of Naboth. He immediately detected treason and turned to flee; but his flight was cut short by an arrow from the bow of Jehu. His lifeless body was thrown into the stolen vineyard of his father. King Ahaziah of Judah, who was at this time Joram's guest, suffered a like fate; so also did his Judean kinsmen, and seventy descendants of Ahab who lived in Samaria. Jezebel, the aged queen, resident in the palace at Jezreel and as of old a potent influence for evil in the court, met her doom in the manner foretold by Elijah. Jehu's zeal for the extermination of Baalism can well be understood. It was in part justified by the extraordinarily critical situation. The cult had, through royal patronage, become deeply rooted in Israel's soil; it had been transplanted, through intermarriage, to the territory of Judah. Drastic measures of reform seemed necessary to save the faith of the Hebrew people. Nevertheless the revolution of Jehu furnishes the topic for one of the bloodiest chapters in Hebrew history. Its cruel inhumanity stands condemned in the light of Israel's later moral development. The voice of reproach was lifted against it by the prophet Hosea, who, shocked by the conception of religion which it implied, placed upon Jehu's act a large share of the responsibility for Israel's speedy decline.[1]

The day of the beginning of this decline was indeed not far off. For a proof of the punishment which was meted out to Jehu, we are referred once more to Shalmaneser's record.[2] The Assyrian inscription represents him as paying heavy tribute to the eastern monarch before the close of his first year's reign in Israel. Of the remaining twenty-five years of his kingship four were spent in condescending vassalage to Assyria; thereafter he

[1] Hosea I:4.

[2] The record is that of the famous Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III. The year is 842 B. C.

became the harassed and finally overpowered victim of Hazael, king of Syria. Under the rule of Jehoahaz, his son, the kingdom of Israel was completely at Hazael's mercy. Samaria itself was besieged by the next Syrian king, Benhadad III. For a time it appeared as if the end of Israel's troubled career had come.[1]

Then, almost suddenly, a change occurred in the political fortunes of the kingdom. An event transpired to which the Biblical historian referred in the following words: "And Jehovah gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians." [2] Who this saviour was is not altogether certain. He may have been Jeroboam II during whose reign Israel enjoyed a brief period of marked national development.[3] There is the possibility that the deliverer here meant was the king of Assyria. A recent archæological discovery, however, adds a third possibility. It may be inferred from this record that help for Israel was expected from the rising little Aramean kingdom of Zakar, king of Hamath and Laash, which was establishing itself on the Orontes River north of Palestine.[4]

This time the empire faced serious difficulty in adjusting itself to three rapidly growing powers which were contending for the future supremacy of the East. They were the Medes, who were pressing westward across the Zagros mountains, the Chaldeans, who were moving northward under the severe protest of Assyria, and the warlike Urartu, who were entering Assyrian territory from the north. Foreign aggressiveness resulted in a temporary interruption of Assyria's widening influence. It introduced an interval between the third and fourth periods of the empire's national expansion, during which the kingdom of

[1] The story of the siege as told in II Kings VI–VII probably belongs to this time. Chapter VI:25–30 gives an account of the terror of the famine which at last drove the people to the eating of human flesh.

[2] II Kings XIII:5.

[3] Jeroboam was the son of Jehoash, and the grandson of Jehoahaz. Jeroboam's reign extended from 785 to 745 B. C.

[4] The inscription was unearthed in northern Mesopotamia by the French consul M. Pognon. It consists of several stone fragments containing about forty legible cuneiform lines. For a translation of the first and best preserved part see Kent's Historical Bible, Vol. III, p. 52.

Israel enjoyed its happy Indian summer of political freedom and material prosperity.[1] The circumstances for it were in every way favorable. Syria had at first been held in check by Israel's friendly ally. King Amaziah of Judah foolishly chose the wrong time to measure his strength with Jehoash, Jeroboam's father. As a result Judah became a temporary vassal to Israel. Jeroboam II, during his forty years' reign, held both Syria and Moab in complete subjection. His kingdom extended from Hamath, in central Syria, to the head of the gulf of Akabah, and comprised practically the whole territory of the renowned empire of David.

III. ISRAEL AND ASSYRIA

History often repeats itself, but with ever varying results under changing circumstances. New complexities arise which ceaselessly redetermine the destinies of nations and men. The kingdom of Jeroboam II resembled that of David only in outward appearance. The advance of civilization in Palestine and in the East brought with it two notable changes, the one social, the other political and international. Life in the Hebrew state underwent the usual transformation brought about by prolonged military and commercial enterprises: (1) a depletion of man power with a consequent impoverishment of the middle class population; (2) a redistribution of social and material wealth to the advantage of the military and commercial lords, with a resultant oppression of the poor; (3) religious formalism leading to the adoption of a professional priesthood; and (4) moral degeneration through grave social injustice and through the self-deception of mistaking a false prosperity, based upon criminal practices condoned by religious hypocrisy, for national well-being and a proof of Jehovah's special favor.

Internationally the situation was changing into one of impending peril. Syria, Israel, and Judah, together with Phœnicia

[1] The years of this interval were those from the death of Adad-Nariri, in 782 B. C., to the accession of Tiglath Pileser IV, in 745 B. C. Compare these dates with 785–745 B. C., the period of the rule of Jeroboam II.

and Philistia, were directly on the crossroads of powers then contending for Asiatic supremacy. These powers were Egypt and Assyria. The life of the Hebrew people had come to be "like the life of a man who insists upon living in the middle of a thoroughfare, and is consequently being run over by omnibuses and motor-lorries." [1] Egypt was for a time able to do little else than join Palestine in a common revolt. Its chief successes were those of instigation. By persuading these smaller nations to fight its battles, it was able to assume the role of a loyal ally for a period of nearly two centuries.[2] Assyria, on the other hand, was the aggressor. The campaign against Syria and Palestine, begun by Shalmaneser III, was only temporarily halted. Eventually it was to be resumed. How long would be the interval no one could yet tell. The rulers and nobles of Israel thought the day of Assyria's return far off and refused to be alarmed. The rank and file of the population either rejoiced in the national prosperity or willingly endured the yoke of serfdom. Two prophets, however, arose who clearly sensed the danger; they were Amos and Hosea.

AMOS

The first of these prophets was a native of Judah. His home was in Tekoa, a village not far south of Bethlehem. He belonged to that small minority of the Hebrew peasant class that had not altogether lost its original sense of individual independence. His daily occupation was on the farm and among his herds, but his thoughts dwelt often with his people and their Hebrew kinsmen in the north. Business necessity occasionally took him to the leading city markets within and in the vicinity of Jerusalem. One of these market places was at Bethel, just across Judah's boundary in the southern territory of Israel. Bethel was

[1] H. G. Wells, Outline of History, p. 229.

[2] Assyria's object from the beginning was to reach the Mediterranean and completely to subdue Egypt. From the period of the battle of Karkar in 854, in the western campaign of Shalmaneser III, to the final expedition under Ashurbanipal, in 661, Egypt withstood subjugation. About ten years later Assyria lost its power in the West. In 612 the Assyrian empire fell into the hands of the Chaldeans.

one of the two principal religious sanctuaries in the northern kingdom.[1] People came there from far and near to buy, to sell, or to beg, and many of them remained to worship. Amos was depressed by the plainly commercial background of this religious attitude. The mercenary motive was everywhere present. Sacrifices were offered in the name of Jehovah, but to the god of success. Religion was considered a necessary business adjunct. Piety had degenerated into vain hypocrisy; its display was an open offense to God.

Worse still, however, was the reaction of such false religious conceptions upon daily life. Social practices resulted which were plainly inhuman. Dishonesty and injustice were not only everywhere apparent but condoned by those who regarded themselves as the special beneficiaries of the bountiful blessings of Jehovah. Religion was all but completely divorced from morality. It had degenerated into a perfunctory priestly ritual whose sole manifest purpose was to assure Israel's deity that the wealth and good fortune showered upon its preferred social classes were not unappreciated. As for the poor, they were first cleverly outwitted and then either forcibly enslaved or contemptuously disregarded. Their bad fortune was regarded as proof that for some sin the curse of God was upon them. These princes and nobles of Israel had either no thought at all or no misgivings concerning the future. Tricked by their own false philosophy, they left consideration of it to the care of Jehovah. It was to Jehovah's own interest to insure the perpetuity of the nation; its decline endangered His supremacy among the gods of the world, and would be interpreted as a sign of His weakness. Thus deceived by its unthinking selfishness, Israel prepared the way for its own destruction.

The message of Amos sounded a new note in Hebrew prophecy. It was the first of the school of the new prophetism whose influence was to be the dominant factor in Israel's history for the next three centuries. This keynote was righteousness. Religion, according to Amos, implies morality; its noblest outward

[1] The other sanctuary was Dan, in the far northern extremity of the land.

expression is social justice; its practical aim is the development of human character. Amos was not only a seer or divine oracle; he was a great moral and social reformer, a man acquainted with his people and his time and very unusually gifted as an ethical and religious philosopher. He is aptly called Israel's prophet of righteousness or preacher of the moral law. The date of his prophetic utterances is somewhere between 750 and 740 B. C.

The book of Amos is one of the oldest complete literary productions in the Old Testament. In respect to both its form and its content it is an acknowledged masterpiece. Chronologically it stands at the head of the list of the prophetic writings; logically it falls into three well outlined literary parts.[1] Without here entering upon a detailed study of the book its principal teachings may be summed up as follows: (1) Jehovah is the God, not of Israel only, but of all nations, and of the created universe; (2) He is interested in political governments and in the destinies of nations, but solely for the sake of their spiritual and moral development; (3) His special care and guidance of Israel place upon the nation a special responsibility to be an example of righteousness and faith; (4) nations and individuals everywhere are judged by God, not according to their confessed creeds or the formal manner of their worship but to the extent of their spiritual enlightenment and by the moral quality of their human relationships; (5) religion, to be genuine and of worth, must find an outlet in human character; (6) social justice lies at the basis of all national and individual progress; (7) sin brings punishment, but righteousness will triumph and endure; Israel will go into captivity, but a faithful remnant will be preserved to be a blessing to the world.

The words of Amos fell, for the most part, upon deaf ears.

[1] These divisions are: (1) Chapters I–II: an introductory series of oracles directed against Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and Judah, and finally against Israel; (2) Chapters III–VI: three discourses of judgment directed against the leaders of the nation, each discourse being formally introduced by "Hear ye this word"; (3) Chapters VII–IX: visions of judgment, culminating in a beautiful promise of Israel's restoration.

They were, however, not long in coming to disastrous fulfilment. Depleted of its man power through war and further weakened by a slow process of moral degeneration, Israel was ill prepared for the trying years just ahead. Assyria, whose mission, according to the prophet, was to be a scourge in the hand of Jehovah for the chastisement of His people, came at length again to ascendancy. Its new leader was Tiglath Pileser IV.[1] Jeroboam II died in 743 B. C., and was followed on the throne by Zechariah his son. After only six months Zechariah was succeeded by Shallum, his assassin. Shallum, in turn, ruled but thirty days when he was assassinated by Menaham, who was able to hold himself in power for six years by an appeal for protection to Assyria.[2] He purchased this protection, however, with the sacrifice of his people's independence. Thereafter Israel became Assyria's helpless vassal, to be spared only, if at all, as it seemed expedient to the conquering master. Pekahiah, the next king, ruled one year. He was followed by Pekah, during whose reign, in 734 B. C., Tiglath Pileser, having firmly established his empire, came westward and took possession of the territories east of the Jordan and north of the plain of Esdraelon. After the lapse of two years he came again and completely subdued the Syrian kingdom by the conquest of Damascus.

Israel's last king was Hoshea, a mere puppet, placed on the throne by the Assyrian monarch. Weakling that he was, he could not withstand the instigating influence of Egypt, and became involved in a rebellion against the central power of the empire. The result was that Shalmaneser IV, Assyria's next king, laid siege to Samaria. The city withstood the onset for three years. It fell in 722 B. C., under the assault of Sargon II, who in his annals gives us this record of the outcome: "In the beginning of my reign, and in the first year of my rule . . . Samaria I besieged and took . . . 27,290 inhabitants I carried away; fifty chariots I collected there as a royal force . . . I set (Samaria) up again and made it more populous than before. . . . People from lands which I had taken I settled there.

[1] His reign extended from 745 to 727 B. C.

[2] Menaham made his appeal in 738 B. C.

. . . My men I set over them as governors; tribute and taxes like those of the Assyrians I set over them." [1]

HOSEA

At some time during the early years of Israel's rapid and fateful decline, a prophet arose who was a native of northern Palestine, and from whose written messages we are able to get a very clear view both of the political situation and of the religious life of the period. This prophet was Hosea. He probably appeared shortly before the death of Jeroboam and completed his public utterances before the invasion of Tiglath Pileser. The date of his ministry accordingly falls somewhere between 740 and 735 B. C. Hosea, like Amos, was a preacher of social and moral reform. While, however, the thought of Amos was upon moral responsibility, the burden of Hosea's message was a plea for spiritual religion, a call to worship, and an interpretation of the sympathetic aspect of the nature and character of God. Both were pioneer prophets: Amos in the field of social relationships; Hosea in the realm of religious experience. The one sought to set religion free from formalism and primitive superstition, and to relate it to the persistent human struggle toward freedom and truth; the other endeavored to exalt religion in terms of love and to bring to the foreground its message of divine consolation and redemption.

Hosea's message came to him in a somewhat strange and unusual way. It was suggested to him by his own personal domestic experience. In his youth he had married a young woman who, after only a few years had passed, wearied of her home life and deserted her family for the companionship of a false lover. The names Hosea gave to his children reflect the bitter loneliness of that period of his life.[2] Soon, however, he discovered that time could not destroy the love that had once been awakened

[1] See Rogers, Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament, pp. 326 ff. The siege was begun by Shalmaneser IV and completed by Sargon II, shortly after Shalmaneser's death. The Biblical account in II Kings XVII must be accommodated to the Assyrian records.

[2] He named his little daughter Lo-ruhamah, i. e., "Unpitied."

in him for his now unfaithful wife. One day, while a visitor at the open slave market, he chanced to see her, and promptly bought her for the price of an ordinary domestic slave. Her sin had brought its usual disappointment and degradation. For a time she remained a common servant in Hosea's household. Then, as we read between the lines of the prophet's own record, when she had fully proved her worth, she became again his reinstated and now loyal and devoted wife. As the years passed the prophet discerned in his domestic experience a parable of Jehovah's relationship with Israel. Jehovah had found Israel in distress and had saved her and made her a nation. But Israel had not been true to her vow; she had forgotten her promise at the ancient altar of Sinai. She was even now forsaking God and, in her faithlessness, yielding to the degrading influences of the Canaanite worship of Baal. For this sin Israel is surely to be punished; the penalty will be national decline and ultimate captivity in a foreign land. Nevertheless, Jehovah loves His rebellious people; He cannot give up Ephraim; He will not cast off Israel; He is not man, but God.[1]

The book of Hosea falls into two distinct sections: Chapters I–III; and Chapters IV–XIV. The strong emotional quality, which is dominant in the temperament of the prophet, characterizes its style. The writer is wrestling with a problem that grips him to the soul. Pathos, whose natural literary form of expression is the lyric, is reflected on every page. Its teachings are remarkable for their advanced spiritual and ethical character. They may be epitomized by two significant phrases: man's sin, and God's love. Israel's sin has alienated her from God. Disloyalty to Him lies at the basis of her moral degeneration. A sinful people carries in itself the seeds of its own destruction. Love, on the other hand, refuses to be overpowered by the fact of evil. While hating sin, God loves the sinner. Israel is His possession. She must be chastened through suffering, but she will not be forsaken. Two further teachings owe their later development to this classic of Old Testament prophecy: the one is that spiritual repentance is the first step in the process toward moral

[1] See Chapter XI:8–9 for a rare climax among Hosea's prophetic utterances.

regeneration; the other is that the complete realization of life, toward which all men and nations strive, is a goal made gradually attainable through the increased exercise of men's faculty to apprehend the divine. The prophet looks forward to a time when the earth shall be full of the "knowledge of Jehovah,"—a phrase sufficiently suggestive of his appreciation of the educative function of religion. The place of Hosea among the prophets is outstanding and unique. An eminent Biblical scholar has called him the "Hebrew people's first prophet of grace, Israel's first evangelist." [1]

About the time of the appearance of Amos and Hosea an unknown prophetic writer, who lived in the northern kingdom, was actively engaged in the preparation of a history of the Hebrew people. The literary work by means of which he has become identified is known as the Elohistic history of the Old Testament. It differs from the Jehovistic history, written about a century earlier by an author of the southern kingdom, in its more advanced conception of God, its clearer ethical tone, and its greater abundance of authentic historical information. These histories were the attempts of inspired men to interpret Israel's national career in terms of the noble ideals of the new prophetism.[2]

The words of Amos and Hosea appear to have fallen on deaf ears. Israel's princes and men of wealth had little concern for their country's future. When, accordingly, its brief era of prosperity was ended by the approach of Assyria, there was little left to do but to await the day of the nation's humiliating surrender. The collapse of the kingdom came with the siege and fall of Samaria in 722 B. C. It was a tragic fate that befell the ten tribes at the hands of the Assyrian power. The strongest of the population, regardless of community or family ties, were summarily deported to the farthest regions of the Assyrian empire, where, separated from one another and surrounded by foreigners who were mostly their inferiors, they gradually lost

[1] George Adam Smith.

[2] Later mention will be made of these histories and their contribution to the compilation of the Hexateuch.

their identity and passed into oblivion with the countless millions of unrecorded history. Those who were allowed to remain in Palestine were slightly more fortunate. Their continued residence on historically sacred soil in proximity to Judah prevented the complete disappearance of their ancestral religion. In other respects they suffered the same cruel punishment meted out to their deported kinsmen. It was Assyria's heartless policy to fill the areas made vacant by deportation with similarly unfortunate peoples from other territories which had come under the dominion of the empire. The apparent purpose of this plan was to weaken the resistance of these territories and to make their inhabitants uniformly submissive. The resultant mixture of heterogeneous peoples and races on Palestinian soil—naturally accompanied by an intermingling of religious customs and creeds—created a gulf between the North and the South which deepened and widened throughout the ensuing centuries of Biblical history. The descendants of these mixed peoples were, by the later inhabitants of Judah, contemptuously called the Samaritans. Though in closest geographical proximity, they became an isolated race, a people with whom, as the centuries passed, the Jews would have nothing whatever to do.

The northern kingdom, during the two centuries of its independent history, made several notable contributions to the life of later times. The first of these was the reawakening of the democratic spirit which became responsible for the kingdom's historical origin. Israel itself arose as a protest against political and social despotism. The blame for the regrettable consequences of the division of the hitherto united Hebrew state lay not with the patriots of the north, but with the royal princes of the south. The second gift of northern Israel was the movement known in Old Testament history as the new prophetism. Historically speaking, it owed its rise to the surviving democratic spirit, and its subsequent great influence to the national crises which followed. The revival of Palestinian Baalism called forth Elijah and Elisha; the impending disastrous approach of Assyria furnished the historical occasion for the messages of Amos and Hosea. Israel's third gift was its contri-

bution to sacred Hebrew literature. In addition to the books of Amos and Hosea, its noblest literary monuments are: the Song of Deborah, found in Judges V; the popular stories which gathered about the characters of Elijah and Elisha; and the prophetic history of the Hebrew people, to which reference has previously been made as the Elohistic or Ephraimitish source of the Hexateuch.

CHAPTER XII

THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH: THE ASSYRIAN PERIOD

THE history of Judah as an independent kingdom covers a period of three and one-half centuries.[1] It divides itself conveniently into four minor periods: (1) two comparatively uneventful centuries of internal development from the death of Solomon to the westward expansion of the Assyrian empire; (2) the half century surrounding the ministry of Isaiah; (3) two generations of intervening antiprophetic activity, or religious reaction; (4) the last half century of Judah's history centering about the life and ministry of Jeremiah.[2]

Of the two kingdoms of the divided Hebrew empire Judah was the more fortunate. Although situated at the very door of Egypt, which attempted from time to time to lay its covetous hand upon Palestine, it was able to continue its national career for 150 years following the fall of Samaria. Judah's chief security lay in its mountain territory. Among the rugged uplands which converged toward the peaks of Hebron and Jerusalem its inhabitants found themselves temporarily safe from both military and commercial invasion. The chief open highway for the trade caravans and armies of conquest lay along the Mediterranean, and led from there eastward through the fertile plain of Esdraelon and across the Jordan toward Damascus. The influence of this early period of isolation upon Judah's domestic life was marked in two ways: it did much to save the kingdom from the disintegrating effects of civil and political revolution; it contributed to the purity and perpetuity of the

[1] From 937 to 586 B. C.

[2] The following are the more exact dates of this four-fold division: (1) 937–745; (2) 745–698; (3) 698–641; (4) 641–586. Isaiah's ministry extended from 740 to 701; Jeremiah's from 626 to beyond 586.

nation's religious faith. As a result the incidents of historical consequence in the early life of the southern kingdom were few in number by comparison with the crucial and stirring events which, during this time, happened in the north. Accordingly little more than a rapid sketch is required to carry Judah's history down to the time of the appearance of the new prophetism, of which Isaiah was the first outstanding southern spokesman.

I. THE FIRST TWO CENTURIES

Two dangers confronted Judah immediately following the disruption of the Hebrew monarchy. One was the exhaustion of its material and political resources; the other was a resultant feeling of individual and national discontent. Both were attributable to king Rehoboam's folly. Popular discontent led to widespread discouragement, which in turn gave rise to a recrudescence of primitive idolatrous practices. Upon the ruins of the shattered dream of a mighty Israelite empire the people built altars to the ancient tribal gods of the land. For a time they returned with abandonment to all the abominations of the Canaanitish cults. Just then Egypt, aware of Judah's weakness, decided upon an invasion of Palestine. Under the able leadership of Shishak [1] the Egyptian army forced its way through the old Canaanite stronghold and entered Jerusalem. Shishak himself invaded the temple and the royal palace and despoiled them of their treasures. Added to this threat of foreign dominion was Judah's humiliation at the hands of the rival kingdom to the north. During the twenty years of the reign of Rehoboam and his son Abijam, as well as during the forty years of Asa's reign, there was continual warfare between the two Hebrew kingdoms. These civil wars came to an end only when Asa, king of Judah, in desperation over the advance of Baasha, king of Israel, made an abject and tempting appeal to Benhadad of Syria.

Thereafter the history of both Israel and Judah began a new

[1] Sheshonk I, 945–924 B. C.

course. Ben-hadad's attack upon Israel's northern frontier resulted first in a cessation of civil strife, and then in an alliance between Judah and Israel for the purpose of strengthening the Hebrew kingdoms against threatened Syrian domination. This alliance ripened into friendship in the days of Ahab of Israel when Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, ascended Judah's throne. The newly established friendship, in turn, was confirmed by the royal marriage between Ahaziah, Jehoshaphat's son, and Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. The religious life of Judah underwent a marked improvement under the leadership of Asa and Jehoshaphat. Idolatrous and immoral practices were abandoned, and the religious prostitutes were driven from the land. Both kings were energetic moral reformers. The Biblical writer pays them the tribute of being men whose services were rendered with full acceptance in the sight of Jehovah. With the death of Ahaziah, who fell a victim to the bloody revolution of Jehu, Athaliah became the regent queen of Judah. Thus, unfortunately, Jehu's misguided reformatory zeal against Baalism created the very circumstances for the temporary establishment of this Phœnician cult in the court and realm of Judah. The incident, however, engendered immediate revolt among the religious leaders of the people, and Athaliah's rule was short-lived. At the word of Jehoiada, a faithful priest of the temple, a sudden revolution was proclaimed in the royal court, at which time the boy-king Joash, whose life had been preserved during the queen's murderous attempt to establish her sovereignty, was presented to a delegation of the people as the royal heir to the throne and solemnly crowned. Athaliah, whose crown had been purchased through treachery and bloodshed, dared expect no mercy at the hands of her courtiers. She was slain outside the temple in the open gateway to the royal palace.

The reign of Joash, which began with his seventh year, was long and marked by noteworthy events. Three of them here deserve our special attention. The first was the repair of the temple. The funds for this project were collected by the king himself. A specially made chest was placed at the entrance to the temple where those passing to and fro might make their

contribution. The second event came as a shock to Judah's sense of independence. It was a Syrian invasion under king Hazael, which terminated in an advance against Jerusalem, and from the possible consequences of which the city was saved only by the sacrifice of more treasures from the temple and royal palace. Asa had, a century before, been forced to send tribute to Ben-hadad; since that time the kingdom of Damascus had been a serious menace to the political growth of both Israel and Judah. Both Hebrew kingdoms now lay apparently exhausted and helpless at the feet of the arrogant Syrian power. They were saved from complete submission only by the timely intervention, either of the Assyrian Adadnirari, or of the newly rising Aramean kingdom of Hazrak.[1]

A third event, in all probability to be dated in the reign of Joash, was the literary appearance of what is now known as the oldest history of the rise and development of the Hebrew people. This history, commonly called J, appears to have been the work of a prophet, or group of prophets, who wished to tell the story of the continued spiritual and moral struggle which lay at the foundation of Israel's growth as a nation. The historical narrative begins with the creation of man and ends with the life of David and the complete establishment of the Hebrew monarchy. The writer is not a mere chronicler, but an interpreter of events. He is a philosopher of history. His thesis is that the nation which develops its own spiritual resources and is true to its own soul is certain to prosper and be the guardian of a contented people. Two principal evils seek to destroy a nation: they are a waning or distorted sense of God, and a blindly selfish denial of social responsibility. How clearly this teaching fits into the messages of Amos and Hosea is openly apparent. Nor was it without its salutary influence upon Judah's political life. An encouraging illustration of the beginning of a new moral order is to be found in the first official act of Amaziah, king Joash's son and successor. Joash had been slain by the servants of the royal court, probably for the humiliating

[1] See II Kings XIII:5 for a reference to the "saviour" who came to Israel's rescue at this time.

truce which he made with the Syrian king Hazael.[1] Amaziah, following the customary course of justice, ordered the execution of the assassins. The children of the murderers, however, were not put to death. They were not considered responsible for a crime in which they had had no part. This act of leniency was not so much an expression of royal magnanimity as of the slowly developing spirit of social justice which was the outgrowth of the combined religious activity of the prophets and priests. This period marked the disappearance of the absolute monarch in Hebrew history. It signalized, moreover, the transition from the purely social to the statesman-prophet. Beginning with this date the acknowledged leadership, especially in the southern kingdom, was in the hands of the men who taught the people and not of those who wore the crown. For the first time in Hebrew history Jerusalem's temple overshadowed its royal palace.

Amaziah, it is evident, was too eager for power. When it came to him in his victory over the Edomites, it proved his undoing. Not content with the fruits of a worthy success, he yielded to folly by a resolute attempt to pick a quarrel with king Jehoash of Israel. Jehoash, respectful of the peace and mutual kinship which had served as a bond between the two royal houses, advised him to desist. He gave point to his advice by the use of a parable. Why should the thistle, he asked, determine to match itself with the cedar.[2] But Amaziah was insistent. There was a battle at Bethshemesh, in the territory of Judah, and Amaziah was defeated. The temple was once more raided, and Judah became a temporary vassal of the northern kingdom. After fifteen years of subjugation, as a penalty for his conceit, he met death, a victim of a local conspiracy.

[1] The Chronicler, in II Chronicles XXIV:17–19, records that after Jehoiada's death king Joash disappointed the priests through his waning loyalty to Jehovah. Zechariah, a priest who dared to bring Joash to account for his lapse of religious interest, was ordered slain. The act may have caused an open break between the royal house and the priestly party, and contributed to the conspiracy which ended the king's life.

[2] See II Kings XIV:8–12. The thistle represents Amaziah, the cedar Jehoash; the lion symbolizes ruin.

The reign of Uzziah, Judah's next king, marked the beginning of a new era. Like his contemporary, Jeroboam II of Israel, he was an energetic statesman and a military leader. While Jeroboam was reconquering the east-Jordan territory by taking it from the hands of the Syrians, and thereby extending his dominion over Moab, Uzziah took the opportunity to expand and secure his kingdom by a series of successful expeditions against, (1) the Syrian strongholds of ancient Philistia, (2) the Arabians in the semi-desert region to the south, and (3) the Ammonites then in possession of the trans-Jordan gateway to Palestine from the East. Next he turned to a careful fortification of the capital city; and subsequently to a development of the kingdom's internal resources through a special emphasis upon commerce and agriculture. The half century of Uzziah's rule, which included also the short reign of Jotham, his son, brought renewed vigor into the life of Judah. It did this in two ways: first by its reëstablishment of open and intimate contact with surrounding nations; second by its assurance of unsurpassed material prosperity. As was to be expected, the change wrought by these outward influences very soon began to have its effect upon the nation's inner life and character. The signs of this change were primarily religious and social. The sudden transition from the old-time family simplicity of the Hebrew people to a life of freedom, ease, and luxury was morally hard to endure. It was a temporary and disguised blessing which all too soon revealed itself as a curse. Even the historic faith of the Hebrews could not sustain itself in the face of unlimited physical comfort and the enjoyment of riches. The inevitable result was a rapid moral deterioration, hastened rather than ameliorated by an intensified stress upon formal and ceremonial religion. The period of prosperity, fortunately, did not last long enough to plunge the nation into ruin. That, indeed, had become the lot of the northern kingdom, which, in the moment of its soft and utter weakness, had fallen into the relentless grip of Assyria. Judah escaped Israel's fate, though not by her own superiority or strength. Its golden era ended, as it had begun, with the career

of Uzziah. By the middle of the eighth century the tide of Assyrian invasion, which had for a long time threatened the borders of Palestine, was perceived to be sweeping westward toward the inundation of both Israel and Judah. It was clearly a time of crisis. A new king had come upon Assyria's throne, and with him the empire had entered upon a new era of political expansion.[1] Then occurred the death of king Uzziah. The event was more than an occasion of national mourning. It signalized impending disaster, and marked a turning point in Judah's history.

II. THE MINISTRY OF ISAIAH

Beginning with this crisis the story of the southern Hebrew kingdom centers upon a great prophet. The historical situation, as it has been briefly outlined, furnishes the background of his call. The years of his early preparation were made eventful by their association with the ministries of Amos and Hosea. The timely messages of these pioneers of the new prophetism must have awakened in him the voice of social prophecy with which he made his first appeal to Judah. It was, however, as a statesman, a philosopher, and a poet-orator that Isaiah rose to a position of preëminence among his contemporaries. Excepting only Jeremiah, he may be considered the Hebrew patriot-prophet without a peer. More truly religious than Judah's priests, more sagacious than her princes, and more noble than her kings, he became the revered, though too oft unheeded, leader and teacher of the people. No religious reformer ever entered upon the duties of his office better equipped. He was of noble birth and thoroughly familiar with the life of the royal court. His access to the presence of the king was without formality or condescension. He had been culturally and diplomatically educated. He was a man of literary genius and of refined social sensibility. Above all he was a prophet of spiritual power, of lofty conceptions, of daring social convictions, and of unquestioning

[1] The rise of Assyria occurred with the accession of Tiglath Pileser IV in 745 B. C.

faith in God. The times demanded a man of uncommon strength and of heroic mold. Isaiah was that man.

Both the character and the teachings of Isaiah are best interpreted in the light of his inaugural vision. The record of it is found in Isaiah VI. Within an appropriate setting of majestic symbolism, four great truths present themselves to us in this chapter; they stand forth like portraits in a golden framework. The first is that of the superb strength and grandeur of moral character; the second is the truth of universal human sinfulness, made plain to the spiritually and morally sensitive soul; the third reveals itself as the truth of divine forgiveness which lies at the basis of every impulse toward the development of human character; the fourth suggests the fact of man's inescapable social responsibility. Associated with these teachings are the further convictions of the young prophet that spiritual blindness and moral perversity are sins which lead to dire and fateful consequences; and that the hope of the world lies in the integrity and faithfulness of a spiritually and sacrificially-minded social minority.

The ministry of Isaiah falls naturally into three periods. Two notable crises in Judah's history separate them and give them individual significance. The first period was brief. It was characterized by social reform. It began with the reign of Jotham in 740 B. C., and culminated in the national crisis of 735 B. C., in the reign of king Ahaz. Isaiah began his work amid signs of spiritual decline and impending national disaster. His first sermon was a plea for social justice. Among his collected prophecies none is better suited to this early time than the poetic discourse of Chapter V, familiarly known as the parable of the vineyard. It is a brilliantly drawn picture of beauty and pathos in which the prophet represents Jehovah's gracious bounty and tender spiritual solicitude side by side with Judah's hardened and barren life. The interpretative portion of the chapter contains a series of warnings against the following hideous crimes: greed, intemperance, frivolity, shallow skepticism and sophistry, and moral treason. The fateful closing paragraph is a stroke of literary genius; it clearly illustrates the prophet's dramatic power

of imagination, his moral passion, and his noble conception of the holiness of God.[1]

The second period of Isaiah's career began when the pitiful social conditions in Judah assumed a grave political aspect. It was the great middle period of his ministry. It dates from the Palestinian crisis in the year 735, to Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem in 701 B. C.[2]

The two kings who ruled Judah during this important time were Ahaz and Hezekiah.[3] Ahaz had scarcely established himself on the throne when an event occurred which influenced the entire subsequent history of the southern kingdom. It was the formation of a confederacy of Syrian and Palestinian states by means of which the participating governments hoped to be able to stem the rising tide of Assyrian supremacy. Because king Rezin of Syria, and Pekah, king of northern Israel, were the originators of this confederacy, the struggle against Assyria which ensued became known in history as the Syro-Ephraimitic war. Pekah and Rezin took steps to compel Ahaz to join the coalition by laying siege to Jerusalem. Ahaz, terror-stricken with the thought of the outcome, rode out one day for an inspection of the city's water supply. Here he was met by Isaiah. The conversation ended in a message of encouragement to the king. The prophet counseled an attitude of quiet confidence in Jehovah, and foretold the speedy downfall of Damascus, and the punishment that awaited northern Israel.[4] Isaiah realized that the foreign power to be feared was neither Syria nor Samaria, but Assyria beyond the Euphrates. Ahaz, too, saw in Assyria a possible menace to Judah's national independence. Accordingly he decided to purchase protection for himself against Syria and

[1] Together with Chapters II–IV, which may be regarded as belonging to this early period of Isaiah's ministry, Chapter V is an arraignment of the sins which attack men and nations of great wealth, political power, and positions of social responsibility. Chapter I may be read as an introductory sermon to the whole collection of Isaiah's prophecies. These comprise Chapters I–XXXIX of the book of Isaiah.

[2] Sennacherib succeeded Sargon, king of Assyria, in 705.

[3] Ahaz ruled from 735 to 720; Hezekiah from 720 to 692.

[4] Read at this time Isaiah VII.

Israel by an offer to become Assyria's subordinate ally.[1] To this plan Isaiah was energetically opposed. He foresaw the consequences of a political alliance based solely upon Assyria's greed and Judah's fear. Assyria, he knew, could not but interpret Ahaz's act as an open confession of his own weakness and as a timely opportunity for the immediate furtherance of its interests in the West. The prophet, therefore, discouraged the alliance on soundly diplomatic grounds. His chief cause of opposition, however, was moral and religious. His interest lay in the preservation of those ethical and spiritual qualities which determine the character of a nation, and without which patriotism is mere sentimentality and a deception. The security of Judah, he taught, lay not in joining forces with the armies of Assyria, but in assuming an individual and national attitude of confidence in God, based upon an understanding acknowledgment of the providential character of Israel's history. Ahaz's policy was a commitment to force; Isaiah's was faith in God.

Judah's subsequent history was a vindication of the truthfulness of Isaiah's message. In 733 B. C., only two years after Ahaz's rejection of Isaiah's counsel, the Assyrian army invaded northern Palestine. Thousands of inhabitants of the territory surrounding the Sea of Galilee were taken captive and deported to regions in the far East. The following year Damascus fell into Assyria's hands. Then followed a decade which witnessed the rapid decline and finally the death struggle of the northern Hebrew kingdom. Samaria fell into the hands of Sargon in 722 B. C.[2]

The shock of this event, endured in silence even by Isaiah himself, served for a little while to keep Judah in apparent contentment with its condition of Assyrian vassalage. Then, quite suddenly, an uprising occurred among the leading cities of Philistia, in which, despite the energetic opposition of Isaiah, Judah very nearly became involved. The prophet's influence,

[1] See II Kings XVI:7–9.

[2] Isaiah XXVIII:1–22 belongs to this period. Note the eloquence of the prophet in his denunciation, the scornful derision of the dissolute priests and false prophets, and Isaiah's reply that Jehovah will talk gibberish to them with the sword of Assyria.

however, prevailed and the danger to Jerusalem was temporarily averted.[1] Isaiah's plea, at this time, for loyalty to Assyria was severely criticized. It was held to be undiplomatic and unpatriotic. The prophet, however, looked beyond the political expediency of international relationships to their moral implications. Ahaz had been unwise in his self-subjugation to Assyria; the consequences of his act were being written into Palestinian history. But Judah had given Assyria a pledge which she could not arbitrarily repudiate. Promises among governments involved principles of honor; they were not measures of mere expediency; they were binding alike to friend and foe, to the strong and the weak. The intensity with which Isaiah lived as well as taught his religious convictions is well characterized in Chapter XX of his prophecies, which deals with this crucial period in the nation's history. The picture of the prophet, who was of aristocratic and noble birth, walking the city streets and enduring the heat and cold of three long successive years, half-clad as a captive, barefooted and bareheaded, and the object of popular sport or bitter contempt, is not only dramatic: it is overpowering and sublime in its representation of moral courage and noble faith in God.

The crisis with which Isaiah's public ministry reached its final climax came in 701 B. C., in the twentieth year of the reign of king Hezekiah. The occasion was a revolt instigated by Egypt against the Assyrian power. Hezekiah, unable to anticipate its inevitable consequences, had permitted himself to become a participant in the rebellion. Phœnicia and Philistia had also joined. Merodach Baladan, a young Chaldean prince who by this time had come to entertain ambitious thoughts of world conquest, had contributed, through an embassy of conspirators, to make the rebellion widespread and effective.[2] He had, however, himself been defeated in his attempt to hold Babylon against

[1] The Egyptian revolt led to Assyrian interference, and to the fall of Ashdod, the capital city, in 711 B. C.

[2] According to Isaiah XXXIX, Hezekiah had ten years before, about the time of the Philistine revolt, entertained an embassy of Merodach Baladan, sent to make secret investigation into Judah's preparedness to resist invasion. Isaiah rebuked the king for his folly of offering hospitality to these spies.

Sargon. In 705 Sargon died and was succeeded by his son Sennacherib, famous in Assyrian history for his successful campaigns against the rising empire of the Chaldeans and against Palestine. Nearly four years were required by him to settle his troubles at home, first with Chaldea, then with the Medes. Then, early in 701 B. C., he led his army westward. He first captured the principal cities of Phœnicia, then those of Philistia, and at last entered the territory of Judah where he laid siege to Lachish, a fortified town southwest of Jerusalem. From there he set up a blockade against Judah's capital, and, in the language of the Assyrian inscription, shut up king Hezekiah "like a bird in a cage." [1] Hezekiah made abject obeisance and paid humiliating tribute in silver and gold from the temple and the royal treasury. Sennacherib seems, however, not to have been content with these material signs of Judah's acknowledgment of his superiority. The campaign against Egypt, which he was about to undertake from Lachish, forbade a policy of leniency toward one of that country's principal allies. An Assyrian military legate was accordingly dispatched to Jerusalem to demand the city's complete and unconditional surrender.[2] The speech of Rabshakeh terrorized Hezekiah and the leaders of his court. A hasty messenger was sent to Isaiah whose word at this time was eagerly received. It was a message of encouraging patriotism and of outspoken judgment against Assyria.[3]

For the prophet this utterance marked an outward change of policy, but no surrender of moral principle. Assyria had broken faith with Judah, its tribute-paying ally. For his abject submission king Hezekiah had been rewarded with further contumelious threats. The truce for which the prophet had declared himself in his former years, and which he had sought faithfully to uphold, was now ended. Sennacherib, for his arrogant injustice, stood condemned and therefore powerless. Je-

[1] One of the best preserved of the Assyrian inscriptions is that known as the Cylinder of Sennacherib. It is a six-sided baked clay cylinder containing descriptions of eight of Sennacherib's campaigns, including the one which led to the siege of Jerusalem.

[2] II Kings XVIII:17–25 and Isaiah XXXVI.

[3] Isaiah XXXVII.

hovah, the ruler of all nations, would henceforth be Assyria's judge. Heretofore a rod of chastisement for Israel and Judah, Assyria would in due time itself be smitten by the rod of Jehovah's righteousness. Its present display of insolence was proof that that day was not far hence.[1] Isaiah consoled the king and his people with the assurance that God would not forsake Judah, and that therefore Jerusalem would stand. It was the Holy City and would not be taken. Its security was the sign of Jehovah's protecting presence and power. For this venture of faith the prophet was amply rewarded. He had brought to his genius of statesmanship the greater gifts of spiritual insight and moral courage, and he had won. By a providential miracle Sennacherib was compelled to withdraw the siege and Jerusalem was saved.[2]

As a teacher of religion Isaiah holds a unique place among the prophets. Two great religious conceptions owe their development to him. This first is that of the holiness of God. This divine characteristic was not regarded by the prophet in the customary ceremonial sense. It was ethically interpreted as the representation of God's absolute moral character. The second was the conception of faith interpreted as an unfaltering assurance of the providential nature of universal history and of individual human life. Faith for Isaiah was not the mere acceptance of a creed; it was a spiritual venture based upon a moral outlook upon life.

The book of Isaiah falls into two general divisions: (1) Chapters I–XXXIX, which contain the collected prophecies of Isaiah

[1] The change of Isaiah's diplomatic policy with respect to Assyria has led many scholars to believe that the Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem did not take place until a later time—c. 690 B. C. A considerable interval is deemed necessary to account for the prophet's altered conviction. The inscription on Sennacherib's cylinder appears to some also to fit best into this supposition. The purposes of our history are sufficiently well served by adhering to 701 B. C. as the date of the siege.

[2] Sennacherib's withdrawal of the siege was made necessary either by an immediate campaign against Ethiopia, or by political troubles in the east. According to the Biblical record in II Kings XIX, he had left Lachish and was rapidly moving in the direction of Egypt when Rabshakeh returned from Jerusalem to the military headquarters. Herodotus records a tradition that a disastrous plague broke out in the camps of the Assyrians resulting in their hasty retreat and return homeward.

of the eighth century B. C.; and (2) Chapters XL–LXVI, which represent a body of prophetic writings of a later date.[1]

At this juncture in Hebrew history another name is added to the illustrious list of its eighth century prophets. It is the name of Micah. He was the last of this early group of social reformers. He was a contemporary and, in all probability, a disciple of Isaiah. The scriptural narrative presents him as a peasant citizen of rural Judah, a man of a deeply sensitive moral nature, of fiery religious passion, and of extraordinary moral courage. His home was in Moresheth of Gath, a village in the elevated but fertile agricultural region bordering on the Philistine plain. The exact date of his prophetic activity is unknown. The first chapter of the book of Micah suggests that his public discourses were delivered shortly before 722 B. C., the year of the fall of Samaria, which marked the end of the northern kingdom.[2] A quotation from the book of Micah in the later prophecies of Jeremiah infers that the preaching of this earlier prophet was more than indirectly responsible for the religious reformation which took place under the leadership of Hezekiah immediately following Judah's deliverance in the crisis of 701 B. C. Isaiah, too, must have had a part in this great reform which did much to settle the problem of social evils in Judah. We cannot but feel, however, that it was Micah's stinging rebuke of the sins of the ruling classes, his bitter irony in helping them to see themselves in their religious hypocrisy, and his dramatic presentation of the picture of Jerusalem's pitiful surrender and fall, which led Hezekiah and his people to humble repentance, following the nation's narrow escape from the prophet's predicted disaster.[3] Portions of the book of Micah appear to be of doubt-

[1] Chapters XL–LV are the work of a great unknown prophet of the period of the exile—586–538 B. C. He is commonly known as Deutero-Isaiah. Chapters LVI–LXVI belong to post-exilic times.

[2] Chapter I:1 assigns the ministry of Micah to the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; i. e., to years somewhere between 740 and 700 B. C.

[3] Hezekiah's reformation is briefly recorded in II Kings XVIII:4. The reference to the brazen serpent of Moses' time clearly suggests the survival of elements of primitive animism in the course of Israel's religious development. The removal of the high places, i. e., the local Canaanite altars adopted as places of worship by the

ful authorship. Of the sections which are clearly the utterances of the eighth century peasant prophet, three particularly arrest the attention of the reader: (1) Chapter III: 1–4, which is Micah's attack upon the rich and ruling classes who skin the poor and eat their flesh; (2) Chapter IV: 1–5, in which the prophet presents us with a beautiful picture of a warless world; and (3) Chapter VI: 6–8,which is justly regarded the noblest definition of religion in all prophetic literature. Chapter VII: 7–20, called the prayer to the Good Shepherd, is probably a later prophetic addition; but it is a very appropriately tranquil ending to a more than usually tempestuous and threatening oracle.

Hebrews following the conquest of Palestine, was a distinct step forward in the moral growth of the nation. This reformatory act, however, led to a movement which two generations later, brought with it its own problem. The movement, as it arose in the time of Jeremiah, and found expression in the book of Deuteronomy, was toward the centralization of all worship at Jerusalem. It was a natural consequence of the city's providential deliverance in 701 B. C. Jerusalem thereafter came to be declared inviolable, being regarded as the permanent abode of Jehovah. When, nearly a century later with the ascendance of the new Babylonian empire, Judah was headed directly toward national disaster, it became the difficult task of Jeremiah to warn the people of the impending destruction of Jerusalem. His task was to contribute to the survival of Israel's religion following the disappearance of the Hebrew state.

CHAPTER XIII

THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH: THE BABYLONIAN PERIOD

THE diminishing kingdom of Judah did not, by this time, extend far beyond the territory surrounding Jerusalem. Its only safety now lay in all but abject loyalty to the empire of Assyria, which at the time of the death of Sennacherib had scaled to the pinnacle of its history as a world power.[1] The conquest of Egypt begun by Esarhaddon [2] was brought to a successful conclusion several years later by Ashurbanipal, Assyria's last great king. Ashurbanipal's long and illustrious reign at Nineveh extended over the middle half of the seventh century. These years, approximately dated, represent the period of the reactionary reign of king Manasseh, Hezekiah's son and successor.[3]

The Assyrian influence during this period was cultural rather than political.[4] Ashurbanipal rebuilt Babylon, which had been destroyed by Sennacherib at the time of its effort toward independence under the leadership of Merodach Baladan. The city was made the home of a great literary and religious library, containing many works of scholarship based upon careful historical research. Records of literary folklore and of legal traditions, dating at least as far back as the time of the illustrious

[1] It should be noted here that, strictly speaking, the Babylonian period in Hebrew history does not begin until after the fall of Nineveh in 612 B. C. Assyria had, however, with the death of Sennacherib, in 681, exerted its greatest political influence upon Judah. Less than a half century later it gave signs of its own weakening, and the new Babylonian or Chaldean power began to press gradually to the world front.

[2] In 675 B. C.

[3] The exact years of Manasseh's reign are 692–638 B. C.

[4] The culture of Assyria was, like that of the later empire of Rome, largely inherited. Its genius was practical. Its desire was for material wealth and territorial expansion. Ancient Babylonia, like the Greek nation, on the other hand, was capable of more successful conquest through culture.

Hammurabi, were made available to readers and kept in active and open circulation. The contact of this appropriated culture of Assyria with the religious life and thought of Judah had several far-reaching consequences. One of them is evident in the prehistorical narratives of the opening chapters of the book of Genesis.[1] Another, more immediate and historically eventful, was Judah's temporary but radical return to idolatry.

I. THE PERSECUTION OF THE PROPHETS

The patron of this movement toward idolatry was Manasseh himself. Under his leadership religious opinion became distinctly antiprophetic. The king posed in the presence of his people as a true religious cosmopolitan. He wished to be known as a royal proponent of genuine liberality and broadmindedness. In reality he favored the spectacular worship and the licentious freedom of the lower heathen cults. Babylonian religion, based upon the worship of the heavenly bodies, was deliberately introduced, not only in the royal court but among the people. Altars were established on the housetops where families gathered for the worship of Ishtar, the queen of heaven, symbolized by the planet Venus.[2] Popular superstition, however, did not stop there. Every Palestinian deity of ancient days was recalled to satisfy the idolatrous fancy and the baser human impulses: the Phœnician Thammuz, god of the recurring springtime; Baal, the Canaanitish god of natural fertility; Chemosh, the national deity of the Moabites; and Moloch, the bloodthirsty demon god of the Ammonites, who demanded for the propitiation of his wrath the offering of child sacrifice. The altar for this horrible rite—once common among all the lower Semitic races—was built, at the direction of king Manasseh, in the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem. It was probably, as the name Tophet indicates, a

[1] The creation and flood stories in Genesis, e. g., bear a very close resemblance to similar stories in the Assyrian inscriptions which are of Babylonian origin. The authors of Genesis drew freely upon these ancient sources. By their faith, however, and their lofty ethical ideals, they transformed their stories into miracles of sacred scripture.

[2] See Jeremiah VII:18.

huge fireplace or pit located in this valley of human sacrifice.[1]

Whatever may have been the cause of Manasseh's shameful return to heathenism—whether abject loyalty to Assyria, or a false ambition to be universally popular, or a deep personal hatred for the great religious statesmen known as the prophets—the consequences of his act marked a turning point in Judah's history. The martyrdom of Isaiah, and possibly also of Micah, caused those noble patriots of the prophetic guild that still survived to seek temporary safety in seclusion. Though hidden, they did not give themselves up to inactivity. Forbidden to speak, they forthwith took to writing the message which, under normal circumstances, they would have delivered in person. To insure its sacred authenticity they applied to it the test of Moses' teaching. Moses himself became the spokesman through the hearts of men of God who interpreted his life and his law in the light of their own prophetic ideals. The book of Deuteronomy, which in its present form is the embodiment of the literary labors of this period, is, accordingly, in a true and literal sense the combined message of Moses and the prophets. It is the record of the law according to Amos and Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, and their noble spiritual successors.[2] This book, written under the stress of a great religious crisis, was destined to have a significant career. Its authors wrought far better than they dared to hope for the future of their faith. They once more called the people of Judah back to Moses; and they gave Moses anew to his people. How this book, hidden away in the temple, came in a later and more favorable time to be found, and how it became the basis of a great religious reformation, we shall presently learn.

Viewed in the light of the age which produced it, the book of Deuteronomy centers in two distinct themes. One is concerned with the purity of religious worship; the other with the essence

[1] This valley came, in later Hebrew history, to be known as Gehinnom, or Gehenna. A perpetual fire was kept burning there for the consumption of the city's refuse. It began thus to symbolize to the Hebrew mind the destruction which awaited the morally worthless of humanity. This is the conception designated in the English language by the word hell.

[2] Cf., e. g., such designations as the gospel according to Luke or Mark.

and character of the religious life. It is first a message against idolatry, with a plea for the centralization of religious worship at Jerusalem; second, it is an interpretation of the moral and the religious life in terms of the noblest human ideal, the ideal of love.[1]

II. JOSIAH AND HIS REFORMATION

Judah's lapse into heathenism came to an abrupt end shortly after the death of Manasseh. The reign of Amon, his son, lasted only a year or two, and was cut short by the hand of the assassin. When Josiah, who was then a child of only eight years, was crowned the next king, it became immediately apparent that the strength of the prophetic party, which had suffered a half century of severe persecution, had not been broken.[2] Though driven into seclusion, the prophets were not without friends who succeeded in winning them influence in the royal court. Thus it happened that under the guidance of Hilkiah, who later became high priest—or of the young prince Zephaniah, who was a descendant of king Hezekiah, and soon afterward became a prophet in Judah—the youthful king grew to manhood trained into sympathy with those ideals which were in a short time to form the basis of his movement of reform.

The mission for which Josiah was providentially prepared was undertaken in 621 B. C. Historically it was well timed. It came at a moment of political reprieve for the little kingdom of Judah. It seemed as though it were being allowed this short period during which to set its house in order for the trying and fateful years that were yet to come. For twenty years or more, following the revolt of Egypt, Assyria had been on the decline.[3]

[1] Cf. Deut. VI:5—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might,"—with Micah VI:6–8; also with Matthew XXII:34–40. Note how the prophetic conceptions of justice, mercy, and holiness, as taught by Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, pervade Deuteronomy, and extend their influence into the teachings of Jesus.

[2] The years of Amon's reign were 638–637 B. C.; those of Josiah 637–608.

[3] The revolt of Egypt under Psammetichus, who established the twenty-sixth dynasty, occurred about 650 B. C. Ashurbanipal, who was king from 668–626 B. C., and ruled Assyria during the years of its greatest national glory, found the empire

Egypt itself, though asserting its strength and getting ready for the memorable contest at Megiddo which was to end tragically for Judah's king, gave, for the time, no outward cause for alarm.

The new Babylonian or Chaldean empire, founded immediately after the death of Ashurbanipal, in 626 B. C., seemed as yet insignificant, and its rise a very remote danger. Only one momentary cloud of war threatened Judah's horizon. It was coming from the far-off and almost unknown region of the north. From the land beyond the Caucasus a horde of barbarous people came pouring into western Asia. In history these people became known as the Scythians. They were a tribe of Indo-European origin. Terrorizing rumors of their cruelty and fearlessness in battle had spread. They had previously caused Assyria much trouble, and were now moving westward for the possession of the territory along the Mediterranean.[1] In 626 B. C. they had entered northern Palestine. Judah trembled in anticipation of the fate which might befall her with the further approach of the Scythians. The crisis thus expected, during an otherwise tranquil period in the nation's history, became one of utmost significance. It reawakened the voice of prophecy which had not been heard in Judah for two generations. The first of the prophets of the seventh century or Chaldean period was Zephaniah; the most important was Jeremiah. Josiah's great reform was, accordingly, the outgrowth of three significant events: the rise and invasion of the Scythians, the revival of the prophetic movement, and the discovery of the book of the Law.

Zephaniah's message was cast in a literary mold, and delivered in a temper that shocked Judah into the sudden realization of an impending judgment. The prophet saw in the terrorizing approach of the Scythian horde the lifted chastening rod of Jehovah. He had observed that, even while giving themselves over to the debasing and fanatical practices of heathenism, many

at last exhausted of man power and unable to reëstablish its authority over the West.

[1] When the Scythians crossed the Caucasus they separated into two hordes. One went southeastward, driving the Urartu before it into Assyria; the other moved southwestward toward the Mediterranean and Egypt.

abject imitators of Manasseh, the late idolatrous king, had made bold protestations of their belief in Jehovah as the God of the nation's material prosperity. They were even then looking forward to a return of Judah's former national independence and political power. The time which was to mean the realization of this hope was popularly known as the Day of Jehovah. Zephaniah did not deny that that day would come. On the contrary, he announced that it was already at hand. Contrary to popular expectation, however, it was to be a day, not of exultation, but of terror. It was to be a day set apart in the calendar of Jehovah on which, in His wrath, He would punish all evildoers, not excepting those among the inhabitants of Judah. On that day, for which Judah was not now prepared, blood would be poured out as dust, and strong men would be driven before the wind as chaff; fierce and unquenchable would be the fire of Jehovah's anger, and complete and pitiful would be the desolation wrought upon the proud and sinful nations of the earth. The Scythians were the weapon with which Judah would be scourged. The book of Zephaniah is noteworthy for its intense moral passion and the striking and vivid imagery of its style. The sermons of the prophet were no mere verdict of cold denunciation; like those of Hosea, they came from the heart of a true patriot who could not bear to see the awful danger which confronted his own people without uttering a cry of warning.

Josiah was in the middle of his reign when Hilkiah, the priest, presented him with the newly found book of the Law. It had been hidden in the secret archives of the temple—probably at the time of the bitter persecution of Manasseh—with the hope that, when better days should come for Judah, the hands which re-consecrated its desecrated altars, should happen upon it. Its discovery was opportune. The dreaded Scythians had either been driven back by Egypt's sword, or accepted its bribe of gold, and had withdrawn, leaving Jerusalem untouched.

The terror, however, of what Judah anticipated, or perhaps witnessed, was enough to turn the people's hearts toward the king, who was intent upon genuine moral and religious reform. After securing the favorable advice of Huldah, the

prophetess, Josiah announced a gathering of all the leading men of the nation. He read the entire book aloud before them all. The men gave their consent to its adoption as the law of the land. The reformation began. Its first step was the abolishment of every vestige of idolatry, and the establishment of a strictly imageless worship of Jehovah. All the heathen altars set up by Manasseh were abolished. Then followed the destruction of the ancient Canaanite sanctuaries throughout the land. This step involved the centralization of all religious worship in Jerusalem. The reinstatement of the annual festival of the Passover was marked by its change from a family feast into a national holiday and a season of pilgrimage to the Holy City.[1]

The most significant aspect of the reformation, however, was its prophetic spirit. The Law and the temple worship were not merely formally adopted: they were infused with a genuinely religious spirit, and invested with the symbolism of the highest human aspirations and the noblest social ideals. The Deuteronomic emphasis is upon a religion of the heart. It finds worthy expression in the sublime commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

The benefits of the revival were immediate and far-reaching. Josiah, however, did not himself live to see his work completed. Judah, though as yet scarcely aware of it, was now swiftly approaching the evening of its political life. Events, which in their complication involved the destinies of three nations, were pressing close to the heart of the little Hebrew kingdom. Assyria, as has already been noted, was tottering, like an old and broken giant, on the verge of national collapse. The newly founded empire of the Chaldeans, with the help of the

[1] From this aspect of the reform two consequences arose which, in the course of time, became a serious hindrance to the religious development of the Hebrew people. The one was extreme reverence for the law, which led to religious legalism; the other was an exclusive focus of the religious life upon Jerusalem, which gradually grew into temple worship. Together they stifled the voice of prophecy, and, centuries later, became the chief source of aggressive opposition to the teachings of Jesus. On the other hand, Jesus' quotations from the book of Deuteronomy—cf., e. g., Mt. XXII:34–39 with Deut. VI:5—are proof of the high regard in which He held its message.

not far off Medes, had established itself in Babylon. Egypt, now well on the way toward an era of renewed prosperity, was preparing to lay claim to the territory of Palestine and Syria.

The turning point came in 608 B. C., when Pharaoh Necho rose to assert the Egyptian supremacy. Josiah, no doubt believing that the happy results of the great religious awakening in Judah were a guaranty of its future military successes, thought this an opportune time to strike for national independence. He determined upon a move to halt the Egyptian advance. The armies of Necho and Josiah met at Megiddo on the northern plain of Esdraelon. Josiah was quickly and easily defeated. A few days later a war chariot arrived in Jerusalem bearing home the body of the slain king. The shock of this tragic outcome of a noble endeavor was keenly felt. The reformation ended almost with Josiah's burial.

The state of popular disappointment and sorrow was, however, ameliorated by the memory of the king's inspiring faith and noble character. Still hopeful of Judah's political future, the people, led by the prophetic party, chose Josiah's younger son Jehoahaz to become his successor. But it happened that King Necho had plans of his own and they were for the subjugation of Judah. He ordered the young king put in chains and taken to Egypt, where he was kept a prisoner never to return. His place was given to Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah. Jehoiakim was a selfish weakling. In order to ingratiate himself with Egypt, to whose interference he owed his crown, he taxed his own people without mercy. The national outlook had become depressing, when the social and religious life of Judah took a sudden turn for the worse. The times which followed called for the return of the prophet and mark the beginning of the outstanding period in the ministry of Jeremiah.

During the early years of Josiah's reformatory reign, a prophet appeared who gave exultant expression to the anticipated downfall of Assyria. This man was Nahum.[1] As his name implies, he was a prophet of consolation; but his message was

[1] The fall of Nineveh, according to the most recent reckoning, occurred in 612 B. C. The most satisfactory date for the book of Nahum, taking all the facts into consideration, is c. 615 B. C.

one of impending doom for Nineveh. Assyria, as Israel's foe, had known neither justice nor mercy. For a century its iron hand had been upon Judah. The day of God's judgment upon it had at last arrived. Yet a little while and the report would resound throughout Judah: Nineveh the mighty has fallen.

III. THE MINISTRY OF JEREMIAH

The greatest character of the Babylonian period was Jeremiah. With Zephaniah, his less gifted associate, he entered upon his ministry in 626 B. C. This was the year of the death of Ashurbanipal, the last great Assyrian king. Jeremiah's home was in Anathoth, a suburban village of Jerusalem. He was the descendant of a long line of noble ancestry that had distinguished itself in the office of the temple priesthood. His spiritual genius was extraordinary. From his earliest childhood he seems to have been conscious of a special providence by which he was being led into an acceptance of his life work. His call, like that of Zephaniah, came with the terrorizing event of the Scythian invasion. The two prophets, from the comparative security of their mountain homes, may have themselves witnessed the disaster wrought by this restless horde of barbarous people among the cities of the western plain. Jeremiah likened it, in his inaugural vision, unto a huge boiling pot or seething caldron, whose burning contents, emptied in the north like a stream of volcanic lava, poured southward to destroy the land. To the young prophet it was a scene of divine judgment, whose visitation upon Judah was anticipated by him as an instrument of spiritual chastening.

His spiritual vision, however, carried him beyond the moment of imminent disaster. The kernel of true prophecy is hope. From it alone germinate the ideals which inspire men to undertake missions of reform. What Jeremiah felt concerning Judah's future was presented to him in the vision of the freshly sprouting almond tree.[1] It was a parable of life ever springing

[1] The suggestiveness of this vision is derived from an interesting play upon the Hebrew word "*Shāḳēd*," meaning almond tree, literally, the "watcher." By a slight change in the vowel sound of the term, clearly distinguishable in the present Mas-

up anew after the fires of devastation have completely spent themselves. Judah will undergo a change; her population will be transformed; but her character, rooted in a rich spiritual past and nurtured by faith, will survive.

Jeremiah cannot, in any exclusive sense, be called a national prophet. His conception could be fitted into no narrowly racial cast. He was broader than Judah, and his interests reached beyond her immediate present. His spirit and his ministry were nobly cosmopolitan. Among her prophets, he was Israel's first internationalist. He was a true citizen and patriot. His prime consideration was Judah's welfare. He was more intent, however, upon the preservation of her religious faith than upon her national perpetuity or prosperity. It was this faith wherewith she was, in the days to come, to bless the world. The agent of the communication of this blessing was not to be the nation, but the Hebrew individual. Through him men and nations everywhere were to come to a knowledge of Jehovah. This knowledge was to have its basis in individual spiritual experience. The proof of Jehovah's presence was not to be the continuance of the centralized temple worship, nor the preservation of the nation, but the consciousness of His abiding spirit in the human heart.[1] Thus the prophet by making religion individual and personal made it international and universal. It was an implied universalism, however, so far as Jeremiah's own ministry was concerned. His more direct mission was to save Judah's religion from the false patriotism which associated it with the popular doctrines of the perpetuity of the temple and the inviolability of Zion.[2] It remained for a prophet of the later period of Judah's exile to proclaim the message of a universal ethical

soretic text, the prophet heard "*shōkēd*," which means "I (Jehovah) am forever watching." The same word is used in Ps. CXXI:4, where Jehovah is spoken of as the keeper of Israel who neither slumbers nor sleeps.

[1] See Jer. XXXI:31–34, in which the prophet presents the central theme of his entire message.

[2] Both of these doctrines were the result of an over-emphasis of timely prophetic messages. Isaiah had taught that Jerusalem would be protected by Jehovah Himself against the armies of Assyria; Deuteronomy, as a basis of Josiah's reformation, had emphasized the city's sacredness and the temple's central place in the religious life of Judah.

monotheism of which Israel was to be the bearer.[1] Jeremiah sought faithfully to prepare the way for the more complete message of that important period. How he did so is a matter of clear historical record. No prophet in Old Testament history was less eager for a career of open publicity; yet none had a more dramatic and a more illustrious ministry.

The years of Jeremiah's prophetic activity fall into four periods, with an additional period of intervening silence. The first of these belonged to the reign of Josiah. It may be called the period of the Scythian songs.[2] These songs, found in Chapters II–VI, represent the first messages of the young prophet. Like those of Zephaniah, they were delivered on the eve of an anticipated Scythian invasion. They present the reader with unmistakable evidence of Jeremiah's literary and spiritual genius. Their value lies in their religious message. As historical predictions, however, they presented Jeremiah with a grave personal problem. The events which they foretold did not come to pass. The dreaded Scythians raised a menacing hand, but they did not strike. Persuaded or defeated by Egypt, they withdrew northward whence they had come. Judged by the literal outcome, Jeremiah's first attempt at prophecy seemed a failure. It seems, from the order of historical circumstances, to have been followed by a marked popular reaction. Jeremiah's right to further prophecy was openly discredited. The disappointment was humiliating to the young prophet's sensitive soul. His whole being shrank from the thought of empty publicity. Adverse criticism drove him into a period of silence in which he remained for thirteen years. They were the years of Josiah's reformation in Judah.[3] If Jeremiah had a part in the reform, it was a comparatively small one. He was not consulted in connection with the discovery of the book of the Law; his voice

[1] This prophet of the exile was Deutero-Isaiah, also familiarly known as the Great Unknown Prophet of the exile.

[2] The five periods of Jeremiah's ministry, together with their dates, are the following: (1) The Scythian Songs in the reign of Josiah, 620–621; (2) a period of silence, 621–608; (3) the period of the reign of Jehoiakim, 608–597; (4) the period of the reign of Zedekiah, 597–586; (5) a final period following 586, the year of the fall of Jerusalem.

[3] 621–608 B. C.

was not heard in behalf of the Deuteronomic emphasis upon the centralized worship in Jerusalem. Judged by his later message he seems indeed to have been opposed to any such undue exaltation of the temple in the religious life of the people of Judah.[1] That he was in thorough sympathy with the spiritual and moral ideals of the reformation is clear and certain. He recognized in it the perpetuation of the prophetic movement, the further development of which was presently to form the basis of his second call.

The occasion of Jeremiah's return to public activity was the untimely death of Josiah. The prophetic party was now without leadership; the task of religious reform in Judah was only half accomplished; the centralized temple worship could of itself not effect the nation's spiritual regeneration. It was, in truth, clearly noticeable that a false hope was fast gaining ground alike among princes and people: the hope based upon the century old doctrine of the inviolability of Zion.[2] The historical crisis in the time of Isaiah had thoroughly justified the prophet's noble venture of faith. The world circumstances had, however, since then undergone a radical change. The empire of Assyria, long decadent, had given way to the newly established kingdom of Babylon. The East had come into the grip of an ambitious and powerful, and still young monarch. The new international situation was critical and menacing. Political events and social conditions within Judah were utterly discouraging. The religious faith of Isaiah was fully preserved in the life and message of Jeremiah, but the radically changed times demanded new forms for its expression. The call in Isaiah's day had been for a religion vital enough to insure the preservation of the Hebrew state; Jeremiah's time demanded a faith strong enough to endure the shock of the nation's dissolution.

The second period of Jeremiah's public ministry began with the reign of Jehoiakim. Josiah, at his death, had been succeeded by Jehoahaz, one of his younger sons. This choice, however,

[1] See Jer. XXXI:31–34.

[2] The origin of this doctrine is traceable to Jerusalem's crisis of 701 B. C., when, during the progress of Sennacherib's siege, Isaiah walked the city streets and exultantly proclaimed that Jehovah would not permit Zion to be taken.

made by the people, at the suggestion of the prophets, did not satisfy Pharaoh Necho who was at this time determined upon Judah's subjugation to Egypt.[1] He accordingly chose Jehoiakim, Josiah's eldest son, and placed him on Judah's throne as Egypt's vassal. The youthful Jehoahaz was put in chains and sent to Egypt never to return. Jehoiakim was a selfish and unpatriotic weakling. Taxed for tribute to Egypt, he in turn oppressed his people, not merely for the payment of a foreign debt, but for the building of an additional royal palace. Social oppression, in which the king led the nobles and princes, again became a general practice and an outrage. Judah's vassalage, her disregard for the fruits of Josiah's reform, her social degeneration, and her helplessness in the face of the approaching army of Babylon, furnish the background for Jeremiah's ministry during this period. The two events which, during these years, come into historical prominence are the fall of Assyria and the Chaldean victory over Egypt, whereby the kingdom of Babylon gained the mastery over Palestine.

The fall of Nineveh, in 612 B. C., had been followed by a division of the Assyrian empire: the territory east of the Tigris had gone to the Medes; the region extending westward had been claimed by the Chaldeans. Palestine and Syria, however, following Necho's victory at Megiddo, had temporarily fallen into the hands of Egypt. The task of settling the question of this double claim, and of subduing the countries of the West, was laid upon the shoulders of the young Chaldean prince Nebuchadnezzar. He undertook his western expedition in 605 B. C. At Carchemish, on the Euphrates, the military and commercial gateway between the East and the West, he met the opposing Egyptian army. The battle ended disastrously for Necho and put an unexpected end to Egypt's dream of permanent supremacy over Palestine. Nevertheless, the humiliation of Egypt, though it had been long sought and eagerly welcomed by Judah, left the fate of the latter unchanged. Jeremiah clearly foresaw that its only outcome for his people would be a change of masters. He knew, too, that young masters are

[1] Josiah, it is remembered, was slain in a battle with Necho in 608.

ambitious, and that therein lay the seal of Judah's doom. Nothing but a nation's moral character could save it under such trying circumstances. It was at this point that Judah was deficient. The prophet could therefore hold out little hope for the future of the Hebrew state. The best that could be done was to preserve Israel's religion and with it a faithful remnant of the Hebrew people through which its faith might be spread among the peoples of the earth.[1]

Jeremiah saw no chance for Judah's safety except in loyalty to Babylon. Political independence was out of the question. Patient submission and forbearance until, in the course of history, God should send a deliverer, were the people's only recourse. King Jehoiakim, however, thought otherwise. Judah's return to freedom and prosperity was necessary to his dream of royal magnificence and personal exploitation. He saw in Pharaoh Necho's defeat and humiliation his own opportunity. His policy was disguised rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar. He began by simulating loyalty to Babylon until he was securely on his throne. Then he withheld the tribute. Jeremiah openly denounced the king's policy. He called it treason. For this act of courage the prophet was himself called a traitor. Jehoiakim defended his conception of the rights of Judah as a nation; Jeremiah upheld the moral principle which binds nations to their word of honor. Jehoiakim has fallen into the wicked ways of the anti-prophetic Manasseh. For his selfishness and profligacy, his encouragement of social oppression, his repudiation of Je-

[1] It was about this time that the prophet Habakkuk appeared to proclaim his significant message. The actual date of his ministry is some time shortly after 605 B. C. The battle of Carchemish had placed Judah in the hands of the new Babylonian conqueror. The questions which Habakkuk confronted were those pressing upon the heart of every loyal patriot in Judah: Had God forsaken His people? Had He indeed turned away from the world? Was He no longer concerned with Israel's moral struggle, and with its prophetic ideals of individual and national righteousness? If so why did He not come to the help of Judah? The only outwardly apparent answer to these questions was the distant rumbling of the terrible Chaldean war chariots. But Habakkuk refused to be satisfied with these external voices. He betook himself to the city's watch tower where his spirit could be given a view of the world at long range. There he saw and heard. The answer was clear: The just man shall live by his faith: time, and the powers of heaven, are on the side of righteousness; while sin carries in itself the seeds of its own destruction.

hovah, and his treasonous conduct he receives the open condemnation of Jeremiah. The prophet predicts for him a violent and shameful death.[1] Again, however, history fails Jeremiah. In II Kings XXIV: 6 we read that Jehoiakim died and was buried—presumably with formal honor—in the tomb of his fathers. Jeremiah is once more discredited. This time he is publicly branded as a false prophet. No wonder that he is haunted by misgivings concerning the certainty of his call to be a prophet. His discouragement is clearly reflected in his writings. His genuine character is revealed by the courage with which he rises out of discouragement. The next scene presents the prophet as standing at the gate of the temple preaching to the assembled princes, warning them with the announcement that their injustice and immorality are determining the ruin of the nation, and that their false trust in the temple and its imposing ritual will be rewarded by nothing less than the destruction of the temple itself.[2] Fearlessly he proclaims that Judah's only safety lies in the adoption of a true spiritual worship, and in the exercise of social justice. As a consequence he is seized and brought to court on the capital charge of blasphemy. His accusers are prepared to execute an immediate sentence of death, but the prophet is saved by the timely intervention of influential friends.[3]

About this time Jeremiah goes on a visit to his home village, Anathoth. Upon his arrival the villagers enter upon a conspiracy to kill him.[4] The prophet is shocked at his own kinsmen's rejection of him, and he falls into a temporary mood of profound dejection. But presently he repents of his doubt, rises, takes courage, and goes to work. How human he is! And how majestic!

Upon another occasion he leads a procession of followers into the valley of Hinnom where he breaks an earthen vessel in their presence, with the dramatic prophecy: "Thus saith

[1] See Jer. XXVII:18 ff.
[2] Jer. VII:1–15, and XXVI:1–24.
[3] Jer. XXVI.
[4] Jer. XI:18–23. Also XII:1–5.

Jehovah, 'Even so will I break this people and this city.' " [1] For this act of courage he is smitten by Pashhur, a temple priest, and put in stocks at the city gate. Jeremiah's words on this occasion are an expression of profound anguish. They are the autobiography of a tragic but noble soul.[2]

Forbidden from this time to enter the temple precincts, Jeremiah resorted to putting his prophecies into writing. With the aid of Baruch, his secretary, he was able not only to reproduce his messages of former times,[3] but also to revise them, and to add later sermons as the occasions demanded. The method of transmitting his discourses to writing was that of oral dictation. When Baruch had fulfilled his first mission as Jeremiah's scribe, he was sent to read the prophetic scroll to the people both in the temple and at the city gate. He read it first to Micaiah, the son of Shaphan, in a chamber of the temple; then again by invitation to a company of princes. Finally it was read aloud to Jehoiakim himself. It was on a winter day and the king was sitting near the open brazier filled with burning coals. One by one, as the sheets were handed to him by the attendant scribes, he took them, cut them into shreds, and cast them into the fire.[4]

When Baruch's report of the event reached Jeremiah, the faithful scribe was bidden to resume his writing. Jeremiah dictated the whole body of his discourses afresh, together with significant interpretative additions. Thus, from an early nucleus, proceeded the literary development of the prophetic book of Jeremiah. Later collections were added as time passed. In its present form the book is a library of sermonic fragments representing the historical period of the forty years of Jeremiah's ministry.

Nebuchadnezzar did not at first take Jehoiakim's rebellion

[1] Jer. XIX:1–14.

[2] Jer. XX is a marvelous chapter of self-revelation. Its pure pathos is unsurpassed in the O. T. literature. The author of the book of Job, at a later period, found it adequate to his needs in dealing with the profoundest world problem, the problem of human suffering.

[3] E. g., Chapters II–VI, the Scythian Songs, and Chapters VII–IX, sermons belonging to the early days of Jehoiakim.

[4] Jer. XXXVI.

seriously. He did not wish unnecessarily to antagonize Judah to bitter revolt. His attitude toward imperial colonization was that of a builder rather than a warrior. In all likelihood, profiting by the adverse example of Assyria, he became more intent upon developing the kingdom's internal resources and beautifying its national capital than upon a mere territorial extension of the empire through wars of foreign aggression and conquest.[1] Jeremiah appreciated the fairness of the Babylonian monarch's policy of comparative moderation. Accordingly he counselled faithful submission on the part of Judah. His word was without avail. The siege of Jerusalem followed. At its very eve occurred the death of Jehoiakim. He was succeeded by Jehoiachin, who came to the throne just in time to pay the penalty of his father's folly. The young king, following Jeremiah's urgent advice, immediately surrendered the city to the Chaldean army.[2] Jerusalem was subjected to plunder but not destroyed. Jehoiachin and his household, together with seven thousand of the artisan population, were deported to Babylon never to return. Thus, robbed of its strength and leadership, the city witnessed the coronation of its last king. The man selected was Zedekiah, a third son of Josiah, the choice of Nebuchadnezzar himself, and a moral weakling. Despite this fact he was probably the ablest person to be found among the members of the left-over population of Judah which Jeremiah likened unto a basket of bad and worm-eaten figs.

Zedekiah's reign marked the third period of Jeremiah's public ministry. The period extended throughout eleven years of social and political confusion.[3] It began with rebellion and ended

[1] Biblical history presents the character of Nebuchadnezzar, whose long reign of forty-two years most nearly rivals that of the ancient Hammurabi, in a somewhat unfavorable light. Present day knowledge of him gives us the impression that he was not only fairly considerate in his treatment of his colonial subjects, but also a man of genuine religious piety and ideals. The following prayer to the Babylonian god, Marduk, as it appears in translation in Kent's Historical Bible, Vol. III, p. 266, reveals this more noble aspect of his character: "O eternal ruler! Lord of all being! May the king whom thou lovest, and whose name thou hast proclaimed, flourish as is pleasing to thee. Do thou lead aright his life, and guide him in a straight path."

[2] This was in 597 B. C.

[3] From 597 to 586 B. C.

with the destruction of Jerusalem and complete national disaster. The national policy of Judah's last king was openly pro-Egyptian. Jeremiah was forced to take a position which the princes of the court contemptuously denounced as pro-Babylonian. Throughout his entire public life Jeremiah was grossly misunderstood and misjudged. Hebrew history records no more heroic or loyal patriot than this prophet. Contrary to his own deepest personal inclinations, it was his tragic lot to be a preacher of doom. He was grief-stricken at the thought of the utter hopelessness of Judah's political future. But he had the rare and sublime courage of a truth-teller. He could neither keep silent nor prophesy a lie. Hananiah, the leader of a group of mercenary prophets, openly defied Jeremiah with the statement that within two years Jehovah would break the yoke of Babylon now resting on the neck of Judah, and set Jehoiachin and his fellow exiles free. Jeremiah's reply was presented in the form of an iron yoke which he made to illustrate his message. Jehovah Himself, he said, would not put Judah's neck into a yoke of iron and make the king of Babylon its master.[1]

King Zedekiah was inclined to be friendly toward Jeremiah. In the end, however, he yielded to the intriguing influence of the pro-Egyptian party.[2] By 588 B. C., Edom, Moab, Ammon, and Phœnicia had consolidated to declare themselves independent. Judah, helpless in the face of the impending crisis, joined the coalition. In 587 Nebuchadnezzar came west and undertook his campaign of the conquest of Palestine. The following year, from his headquarters at Riblah, on the upper Orontes, he ordered the siege of Jerusalem. When the Chaldean battering rams began to be heard within the city walls, Zedekiah summoned Jeremiah to make inquiry of him concerning the outcome. The prophet counseled immediate surrender. Zedekiah, trusting to the judgment of his princes and mercenary prophets, and to

[1] Jer. XXVIII.

[2] At this time, c. 590 B. C., there had risen in Egypt a new and energetic leader by the name of Hophra, who encouraged Judah with the hope that the early downfall of Babylonia would result in Hebrew national independence. Hophra's disguised purpose was to weaken the military power of Nebuchadnezzar and to claim Palestine for himself.

the promised help of Egypt, determined upon resistance to the uttermost. The gravity of the situation soon became apparent. It began to be realized that Jerusalem could be saved only by providential intervention. Accordingly many of the city's inhabitants, in order to please Jehovah, and in accordance with an ordinance in Deuteronomy, set at liberty their household slaves. Then, when help seemed to have arrived with the northward advance of the Egyptian army, and the Chaldeans were compelled temporarily to raise the siege, they more than justified Jeremiah's opinion of their worthlessness by forcing these freedmen back into bondage. Nebuchadnezzar was not long in scattering the invading Egyptians. After that the siege was resumed. Jeremiah announced that Judah's judgment day had at last come; that not even Jehovah could now save her from her fate, because she was not worth saving.[1] These plain words of the prophet were self-interpretative; they could be neither misunderstood nor met in open rebuttal. The weak and cowardly princes found their only recourse in physical violence. Jeremiah was seized and thrown into a miry cistern, in which he would have perished save for the kindly services of Ebed-melech, a hired servant of the court. The prophet gave this final message to the terror-stricken Zedekiah: Give yourself up and the city will be saved; prolong the rebellion and all is lost. The king remained friendly to Jeremiah, but rejected his counsel.

For a year and a half Jerusalem withstood the siege. At last, in 586 B. C., a section of the wall gave way to the battering-rams of the Chaldeans. Zedekiah fled from the palace and out of the city through the south gate, but was overtaken at Jericho and brought to Riblah to face Nebuchadnezzar. Here, after being forced to witness the slaying of his own sons, his eyes were put out and he was led in chains to Babylon. The royal palace and temple were first plundered for their costly treasures, and then burned to the ground. With its walls broken, and its houses and streets abandoned, Jerusalem was left a desolate and

[1] In the words of the prophet's own metaphor, the figs were rotted and now fit only for the fire.

pitiable mass of ruin. A huge caravan of men, women, and children, the left-over population of the fallen city, began slowly to move eastward across the plains toward Babylon. The glory of the Hebrew state was ended, and Israel entered upon a new and disciplinary period in its history. Judah went into exile a broken, but rebellious and untaught nation; she returned, almost two generations later, a consolidated, chastened, and morally educated religious and social community. The transformative influence of these years marks the beginning of a new epoch in Hebrew history.

The remaining period in Jeremiah's career was of brief duration. Turbulent times followed Judah's national disaster. Jerusalem remained a devastated and uninhabited place. The territory of Judah was reduced to a Babylonian colony. Fortunately its rural population had remained comparatively unmolested. A local government was accordingly set up at Mizpah, several miles northwest of the fallen capital, and Gedeliah, a Hebrew prince and an intimate friend of Jeremiah, was stationed there by Nebuchadnezzar as governor. The people of the colony were rapidly learning how to adjust themselves to the new conditions of living, and were settling down to the building of homes and the cultivation of the soil, when the unprotected and trustful governor was suddenly assassinated. The people, who had very shortly before been in uproar, were now panic-stricken with fear of further chastisement at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. Flight to Egypt seemed to many the only way of escape. Those who thus became refugees were, however, not willing to go alone. Jeremiah was arrested and forced to accompany them. A tradition has survived which records that Jeremiah continued his ministry for a brief time among the Egyptian colonists, and in the end died a martyr's death at the hands of his own countrymen.

The message of Jeremiah fell almost altogether upon deaf ears. It has since then, however, gathered its hearers from the ends of the earth. Jeremiah was the prophet of spiritual religion, of individual moral responsibility, and of pure monotheism. His services as an Old Testament prophet and religious

teacher are unsurpassed. But his true greatness was exemplified by his life. As a man of character he was sublime. He is at once the most tragic and the best loved of the great prophetic figures. Both in the purity of his affection and in the depth of his sorrow he is a worthy prototype of Christ.

PART IV

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JUDAISM

CHAPTER XIV

THE EXILE

JUDAH'S national collapse precipitated a crisis in Hebrew history. The half century of exile which followed led to an abrupt turning point in Israel's religious life. The age that lay behind was represented by two distinct historical movements: the first was the origin and growth of the Hebrew monarchy; the second was the rise of the new prophetism. The age which followed witnessed the emergence and development of those religious tendencies which came later to be known and characterized as Judaism. The exilic period was clearly one of transition. It was marked by no stirring political events. There was no longer the pressure of domestic or international political problems; no danger threatened the exiles from foreign quarters; social oppression and religious apostasy were practically evils of the past. It was a period of political twilight, of quiet and profound religious contemplation, of spiritual regeneration, of extraordinary literary activity, and of patient and hopeful endurance. The Hebrews who entered the exile a nation emerged from it a religious community. The exile may be thought of as the bridge across which Israel journeyed in its historical and racial pilgrimage from the soil to the soul.

The men who were its spiritual guardians and guides upon this important journey were the prophets Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah. Both consoled the people while they taught them. Ezekiel, the earlier of the two, was a disciple of Jeremiah. His prophetic career began eleven years before the fall of Jerusalem, when, together with the young king Jehoiachin and several thousand of the noblest of Judah's citizens, he was deported to the land of the exile. Deutero-Isaiah is the unidentified author of the prophetic poems found in Chapters XL–LV in the pres-

ent book of Isaiah. He is familiarly named the Great Unknown Prophet of the exile. His message is peculiarly noteworthy; it represents the combined elements of the ethical monotheism of Isaiah, the noble individualism of Jeremiah, and the Messianic universalism of the noblest spirits of the exile.[1]

I. THE JEWISH COLONISTS

Shortly after the fall of Jerusalem, in 586 B. C., the Judaites, or Jews, as they thereafter came to be known, found themselves settled in three widely differing and separate communities. Those who remained in Palestine, though resident on their own native soil, were in all outward respects the least fortunate. Their rural villages lay waste and depopulated. The larger towns which were the centers of trade, and of the social and religious life of the community, were deprived of the leadership of their best men of education and thrift. Jerusalem, in its desolation, presented a disheartening spectacle. The entire territory of Judah, which was now a Babylonian colony, was subject to hostile attacks from surrounding nations. Many of them, having, formerly, at one time or another, felt the grip of the strong hand of the Hebrew empire, exultantly and maliciously sought this, their opportunity, to equalize the scores of vengeance. The colony's treatment at the hands of Edom, Ammon, Moab, and Philistia was especially harassing and humiliating. Egypt and Phœnicia, too, acted unworthily of the trust which the kings of Israel and Judah alike had, in times past, reposed in them. The strong words of reproof and judgment, pronounced upon these foreign nations by the prophet Ezekiel, reveal clearly the sad bitterness of the lot of the Palestinian patriots.[2] A more emphatic message of denunciation is delivered by the minor prophet Obadiah. When Jerusalem lay prostrated by the army of Babylon, its terror-stricken population had the right to expect sym-

[1] The exile continued from 586 to 538 B. C. Ezekiel's ministry lasted from 592 to 570 B. C.; Second Isaiah's may be dated about 550 B. C.

[2] See Ezekiel, XXV–XXXII.

pathy and aid from the Edomites, who were Judah's kinsmen.[1] Instead they became the allies of Nebuchadnezzar. The refugees who escaped from the fallen city and sought shelter along the ravines which led southeastward down to the Dead Sea were captured by them and handed over to the Chaldeans. For this perfidious act of cruelty a curse is called down upon Edom by the disconsolate but inspired prophet.

The clearest and most pathetic picture, however, of the fall of Jerusalem, and of its tragic consequences for the shattered community life of the land, is found in the book of Lamentations. Tradition has attributed this book to Jeremiah who, for this reason, has had fastened upon him the unjust epithet, the "weeping prophet." Jeremiah was not its author. Nevertheless, whoever wrote it created a literary masterpiece. It is a collection of five dirges, written a short time after Judah's national disaster, and noted among the Biblical writings for their strict formality of style, and for the profound and reasoning pathos with which the author contemplates the thought that God, wearied at last by Judah's sins, has turned away from His own people.

Those of Judah's inhabitants who, after the murder of Gedeliah, sought refuge in Egypt, were more fortunate. Here on historical soil they not only felt politically safe but racially at home. Egypt had from ancient times offered asylum to the Hebrew people.[2] The exiles settled in the town of Taphanes, the Greek Daphnæ, which was an Egyptian fortress situated on the eastern frontier of the lower Nile. There, not far from the region of the modern Suez Canal, and on the main caravan road to the east, they were given an opportunity to live side by side with others who, under similar circumstances or for purposes of trade, had come to this region. Twenty years later, however, with the change of Egyptian rulers, the privileges of this friendly asylum were temporarily withdrawn.

[1] The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother. Jacob himself was the ancestor of the historical Israelites.

[2] Jeremiah twice in his prophecies refers to Egypt as a temporary home of the Hebrews: Chapters XXIV:8; and XLIII:7.

Thereafter many of the Jews either returned to Palestine, or journeyed up the Nile to Memphis and Pathros, where they found large colonies of their own people who had settled there during the preceding troublesome years of Judah's national decline. While at Taphanes the discovered refugees came into immediate touch with strong idolatrous influences. The most degrading of these was the worship of the Queen of Heaven. This heathen cult was of eastern origin. Biblical history records that it was at one time particularly popular among the aristocratic inhabitants of Jerusalem.[1] Jeremiah, who witnessed its adoption by the Jewish colonists in Egypt, called it the curse that had destroyed Judah and that would all but wipe out the Egyptian remnant.

The religious life of the Hebrew colonies of the upper Nile was altogether different. A recent archæological discovery has shown that the worship of Jehovah was not only continued there unmolested, but was signalized by the building of a temple in which sacrifices were offered as in Jerusalem in the days of old. This temple was situated in the island town of Elephantine in the Nile River.[2] The little band of faithful worshipers that congregated there exerted an influence which was distinctly felt in subsequent times. It was composed of men who were spiritual forerunners of the later Jews who found in Alexandria of Egypt a congenial place to adopt Greek philosophical ideas without the surrender of their traditional faith.

[1] The queen is most commonly identified with the Assyrian Ishtar, the planet Venus, worshiped from the roofs of the houses.

[2] The town on the island of Elephantine, whose ruins have bees discovered, is about five miles below the first cataract, just opposite Assuan. The number of exiles who settled there between 600 and 550 B. C. may have exceeded a thousand. The discovery which revealed the existence of this temple of ancient times was made in 1907, when an archæologist unearthed a long preserved piece of papyrus which turned out to be a letter addressed by some unknown representative of the Jewish colony to Bagohi, the Persian governor of Palestine. In this letter the writer tells of the temple built by them for the worship of the God Jahu. He states further that in a local insurrection on the island, without the consent of the Persian government, the temple had been destroyed. The burden of the letter is a plea for permission and aid to rebuild it. The letter is dated, and was written in 408 B. C. This temple of Yahu at Elephantine should not be confused by the reader with that built by the Jews at Leontopolis, in the Nile Delta, about 170 B. C., during the period of the Maccabean rebellion.

The community of Babylonian exiles was the product of three successive deportations. The first took place in 597 B. C. when king Jehoiachin and the prophet Ezekiel, together with about seven thousand of the aristocracy of the population, were taken from Jerusalem to form the basis of the Jewish colony on the banks of the Euphrates. The second followed in 586 B. C., after the fall of Jerusalem, and constituted the main body of exiles. Probably the number did not exceed twenty-five thousand. Yet, small as was the Babylonian colony, it held in its trust the future promise of the Hebrew race. The persons who composed it were the best representatives of Judah's skill and culture. The prophets, before and after the exile, referred to them as the faithful remnant who were to become the bearers of Israel's faith to the peoples of the earth. The third detachment to arrive in Babylon was made up of those who were brought there after the assassination of Gedeliah. They became an immediate part of the Jewish community already established.

The home of the exiles was upon the banks of the River Chebar. This stream was in reality not a river but a large navigable canal, which tapped the abundant water supply of the Euphrates and ran in a southeasterly direction from Babylon to Nippur. Smaller intersecting canals irrigated the low and fertile territory thus naturally adapted to the pursuit of agriculture. Slightly elevated plateaus dotted the country here and there, furnishing attractive and protected sites for the villages and homes of the colonists.[1] On its physical and material side the lot of the exiles was not one of extreme hardship. Religiously, too, they were given a comparative degree of freedom. Community life, kept intact by Ezekiel and his assistant leaders, continued largely as before. Under conditions of an enforced freedom from problems of politics and state, the minds of men turned naturally to questions of Israel's history and religion. They were driven also to a life of contemplation by the spiritual

[1] These plateaus or artificial mounds (tels) were the remaining ruins of ancient citadels or towns. They were evidences of the great antiquity of the lower Mesopotamian civilization.

suffering which they endured. Unutterable loneliness seized the hearts of the waiting colonists with the lengthening years of the exile. The aged and religiously patriotic wept and languished in their separation from their kindred and their native soil. Time increased the pain and the sorrow, and multiplied the graves in this foreign land of wealth and plenty. The intensest grief of these patriots was in behalf of their faith. With the destruction of the sacred city and the temple some of them felt themselves not only bereft of their home but actually forsaken of God; while others clung all the more desperately to the hope held out by the prophecies of Israel's great men of the past. Thus a generation passed. At last even the songs of Zion ceased, and the majority of those who still survived settled down to an existence of calm despair.[1]

The lamp of faith, however, though burning low, was not extinguished. The voice of prophecy, kept alive throughout the long night, began to proclaim the coming of a new dawn. Sustained by Israel's genius for hope, a group of alert and courageous leaders arose who, gradually and with certainty, discerned both the meaning of the nation's past experience and the bearing of this experience upon the future history of mankind. The result was a great literary awakening which found expression in written history and prophecy.

II. THE GREAT TRANSITION

Behind the extraordinary literary activity of the period of the exile lay Israel's racial and religious transformation. The spiritual teachings of Jeremiah had at last borne their fruit. Judah's history was proof that God was no respecter of nations or persons. Religion, it was learned, was based upon individual faith and fellowship with God, and not upon historical tradition or priestly ritual. Sin was punished and righteousness was rewarded. Evil designs, however artfully disguised or accompanied by protestations of piety, terminated disastrously; while a people's vicissitudes, nobly endured, carried with them a chas-

[1] See Is. XIV:3; Is. XLVII:5; Ps. CXXXVII.

tening moral effect and led to an awakened consciousness of a people's providential place and mission in the world. The law of the spirit had been written at last in Israel's heart.[1] The two men who, more than any others, brought Judah through the exilic period a religiously transformed people, were the prophets Ezekiel and Second Isaiah.

For an acquaintance with the beginning of Ezekiel's ministry we must go back to the period of the last ten years of Judah's national history. His early message to the first deported exiles was one of severe denunciation. It was directed against the false hope of an early deliverance from the Babylonian captivity. The fall and destruction of Jerusalem verified the truthfulness of his warning. Thereafter he became the faithful shepherd and teacher of the exilic Jewish community. His gifts and character were remarkable. His writings reveal a literary training and genius unexcelled elsewhere in the Old Testament. They are the work of a combined scholar, poet, philosopher, prophet, and priest. The prophetic and priestly aspects of his ministry are equally outstanding. In his message there is a combination of moral passion, sound reflection, literary skill, orderliness and mastery of detail, and enthusiasm for ritualistic forms of conduct and worship, which mark the exilic period as one of transition from prophetism to Judaism. Because of the unique and forceful way in which he associates the developing Messianic hope with a newly awakened zeal for the Mosaic law, Ezekiel rightly has come to be regarded as the father of the Judaistic movement in Hebrew history.

The book of Ezekiel, too, represents the period of transition from spoken to written prophecy.[2] Its two clearly planned divisions correspond to the two periods and aspects of Ezekiel's ministry. Chapters I–XXXII, written between 597 and 586

[1] See Jer. XXXI:31–34, which is commonly regarded as a summarized statement of Jeremiah's religious message.

[2] Although portions of Jeremiah's prophecies, of an earlier date, had been committed to writing, they reveal both the temper and the style of the spoken word. Jeremiah's prophecies are spontaneous utterances; Ezekiel's are studied and deliberate treatises. With Jeremiah the symbolism is purely illustrative; with Ezekiel it forms the basis of a carefully wrought out literary plan.

B. C., foretell the destruction of Jerusalem and pronounce judgment against the foreign nations whose insolent pride has aroused the wrath of God. These chapters are messages of disillusionment, intended to shake the false confidence that Jerusalem was an inviolable city and that its fall would be an open confession of Jehovah's weakness. A spirit of woe pervades these chapters, which rises from time to time to the pathos and cry of a lamentation. There are moments when the author's style is a little too symbolical, when the reader is impressed by the too frequent use of the literary device. Then, suddenly, it catches fire, and the ardor of poetry and passion lift it to dramatic and spiritual heights.[1]

Chapters XXXIII–XLVIII are altogether different both in mood and thought. Discouragement gives way to hope. Prophecies of Jerusalem's fall are displaced by a beautiful picture and an accurate plan of the city's future restoration. Judah's fate has vindicated Jehovah in His demand for justice; the land's speedy restitution is now to follow as a proof of His mercy and His power. Though sin has brought punishment, it can neither defeat God's providence, nor destroy the soul of His people. Jehovah Himself will rebuild Zion, and it will be His own city. Righteous princes will be its governors, but Jehovah will be its king. The rough and barren hills of the land will be made productive; Judah and Ephraim will join to become one strong nation; and heaven itself will be its future guardian and protector.[2]

The closing chapters, XL–XLVIII, reveal most clearly the priestly aspect of Ezekiel's character and teaching. The prophetic ideal of a morally and spiritually regenerated community is not abandoned. Individual and social responsibility is not minimized. Judah henceforth, as before, will need her prophets, who will be her watchmen. But, more than ever, she will need

[1] Read, e. g., Chap. XXIV, written within a few weeks of the beginning of the final siege of Jerusalem, in 587 B. C. Note the burning caldron, which represents the city of Jerusalem: the pieces of flesh are the inhabitants; the fire is the siege.

[2] This picture of the restoration of Palestine is elaborately presented in Chapters XXIII–XXXIX. Note their apocalyptic character. An outstanding element in apocalyptic literature, as we shall see from our later study, is its insistent supernaturalism.

the shepherding and protecting care of her pastors, the priests, the guardians of Israel's traditional religion. To make the great spiritual teachings of the past practically and generally available, they are, by the prophet-priest, cast into an ecclesiastical or institutional mold. Religion thus becomes a law; moral obligations adhere to prescriptions rather than to the basic human impulses; and worship partakes more of the character of a formal ceremony than of the genius of a brooding and individual mysticism. That Ezekiel emphasized moral integrity and social justice as essential to true faith in Jehovah is everywhere apparent. Moreover,[1] it is to be noted that the form of institutional life prescribed by the prophet for the restored Jewish community is definitely theocratic, and that it is intended for a people already spiritually regenerated.

The religious teachings of Ezekiel may be summarized as follows: (1) the exile is a just punishment for Judah's sins; (2) Judah's experience in Babylon is for the disciplining of her moral and spiritual character; (3) the end of the Hebrew nation is to mark the beginning of a new emphasis in religion, the emphasis upon the individual; (4) in the future men are to be rewarded for their own virtues and punished for their own sins; (5) the end of the exile will find Judah a new and spiritually transformed community; (6) Judah's extremity is proving to be God's opportunity: a glorious future awaits the chastened and redeemed remnant of Israel.

While, in his later days, Ezekiel was engaged in giving hope and comfort to the exiles with his program for their political and religious future, others, who shared his view regarding the cause of Judah's national calamity, gave themselves to the task of justifying the tragic outcome by means of a careful survey of the principal events of Hebrew history. The attempt met with extraordinary success. It verified the two-century-old prophetic claim that the character and purpose of God are clearly revealed in the destinies of empires and nations. It proved that history had a meaning and therefore a message for all future ages.

The historians who undertook their chosen task were not en-

[1] See e. g., Chapters III, XVIII, and XXXIII.

tering a hitherto unexplored field. Previously written records lay open before them. The Jehovist and Elohist writers, as far as time and circumstances permitted, had done their work well. It was, however, necessarily incomplete. The individual narratives lacked comprehensiveness and unity. Now that the epoch, of which they formed a part, had ended, an editorial hand was needed to bring them together and to impart to future generations their combined message.[1] The moral approach to Israel's history had already been definitely undertaken by the Deuteronomic prophets. It had yielded the principle that nations, like individuals, must be punished for their sins, and that such punishment was necessary both for the chastisement of a rebellious people and for the vindication of the righteous judgment of God. When the prophetic redactors applied this principle to Judah's closing national life, they wrought a two-fold miracle. First, they saved the faith of the profoundly disturbed and disheartened exiles; second, they elevated Hebrew history to the plane of sacred scripture. Thus these unknown men of spiritual genius made the world for all time their debtor.

Through a similar process of literary activity the surviving sermonic messages of the great prophets, whose work had been done prior to the time of the exile, were collected and edited so as to form the major prophetic books of scripture. Encouraged by the example of Ezekiel, moreover, certain others among the exiles, whose interests ran strongly in the direction of a priestly religion, began a study and revision of the legislative history of the Hebrew people. The result was a compiled library of prophetic, historical, and legalistic literature which formed the original nucleus of the Hebrew Bible.

Life for the exiles in Babylon was, as we have noted, not wholly intolerable. The material prosperity and cultural environment of their place of captivity did much to ameliorate

[1] J and E wrote primarily as national historians. We must assume that earlier attempts had been made to combine their work into a single narrative. The events after 850 for J, and 750 for E, of course, had to be subsequently supplied. The Deuteronomic perspective was added after 621 B. C. The exilic historians benefited by the work of all the previous prophets and writers.

the conditions which brought them loneliness and suffering. The hope that had been aroused by Ezekiel was accordingly put to a severe test. Time began to take its heavy toll among those who had made the fateful journey from the land of their nativity. Every Hebrew grave in Babylon became a sacred tie which grew gradually stronger and, at last, bound many of the rising younger generation to their adopted eastern home. Many of them through intermarriage accepted the social life and religion of Babylon. They succumbed to the heathen influence and, after a short time, drifted into oblivion.

Nevertheless there were those in whom, despite the years of painful waiting, the spirit of hope refused to die. They were the true patriots, Israel's faithful remnant, who, keeping an ever watchful eye upon the outward events of history, discerned the changing times and looked forward with eager expectancy to the advent of the day of their deliverance. It dawned at last with the rise of an eastern power whose westward journey brought release from captivity to a number of subjected races and peoples of the time. The newly appearing empire was that of the Medes and Persians. The deliverer, around whom were gathered the hopes of the exiles of Judah, was Cyrus; and the prophet who, with words of matchless power and poetic beauty, gave this hope its prophetic voice was Second Isaiah. This notable character was the author of chapters XL–LV of the present book of Isaiah.

The reign of Nebuchadnezzar had continued for twenty-five years after the fall of Jerusalem. He had been followed by Evil Merodach, with whom the Babylonian kingdom began its rapid decline. After a rule of only three years Merodach was murdered and succeeded on the throne by Neriglissar who, after four years, was compelled to surrender the throne to Nabonidus.[1] The events which led to the fall of Babylon occurred during the reign of this king. In 549 B. C. Cyrus, then king of Anshan,

[1] The dates for the reign of the Babylonian kings are the following: Nabopolassar, 626–205; Nebuchadnezzar, 605–562; Evil Merodach, 562–559; Neriglissar, 559–555; Nabonidus, 555–538. Nabonidus, the last of the Babylonian kings, was more interested in religion than in politics. He accordingly appointed his son Belshazzar regent of the declining empire.

a small territory in the region of Elam, secured control of Media, and was welcomed to its rulership. Three years later, after conquering Mesopotamia, he became king of the Persian empire. The next year, in 545 B. C., he conducted his successful campaign against Crœsus, king of the western empire of Lydia. He thereby gained a foothold in Asia Minor and succeeded in subduing the Greek colonies along the Ægean. Early in 538 B. C. he undertook his military advance against Babylon. The city yielded to him without a struggle. The Persian army entered its gates which were opened by the priests of the city in declaration of their disgust with the king's enthusiasm for foreign forms of idolatry. Belshazzar, the prince and ruler of Babylon, was slain, and the king was sent into exile.

The new Persian government proved itself worthy of the confidence and hope which it inspired in the hearts of the waiting exiles. Cyrus won the immediate respect and loyalty of his Jewish subjects. In addition to being a ruler of military and administrative genius, he was sanely and broadly tolerant and genuinely religious. Being a Persian, and therefore of Aryan blood, he was, with many others of his race, a loyal disciple of Zoroaster and a worshiper of the one God, known to him by the Persian name Ahura Mazda.[1]

Israel's noble ethical monotheism of the days of the exile accordingly must have made its own deep appeal to his sympathetic and understanding mind. His lofty religious conceptions were matched by a policy of broad and sagacious humanitarianism. The program of restoration adopted by him, and applied to the majority of the exile colonists of the empire, served as an example of his wise and ethical statesmanship. What it was to mean to the future of the race and religion of Israel only the coming centuries could reveal. Cyrus could scarcely have dreamed that his edict of 538 B. C. would prove to be the greatest turning point in Hebrew history. Such it became, and more: it marked the literal dawn of a new day, the birth of a new people and of a new religion. Without it there probably

[1] The great founder of Zoroastrianism lived c. 600 B. C. Ahura Mazda, the God of light, was symbolized by the sun disc.

would have been no Hebrew Bible, no Judaism, and, so far as we can humanly estimate, no Christianity.[1]

The prophetic poems of Isaiah XL–LV are an interpretation of the thought and hope of the Jewish exiles of the late Babylonian period. Unlike Chapters I–XXXIX, which are messages of moral and religious reform intermingled with pleas for repentance or warnings of impending national judgment, these chapters are a proclamation of prophecy's fulfilment; they are an announcement of good news, of a warfare ended, a task accomplished, and a mission fulfilled.[2] The sermons of the First Isaiah were, for the most part, spontaneous oratorical appeals intended to be heard by the leading social and political classes, by princes, patriots, and kings; the writings of the Second Isaiah are the saintly meditative broodings of one whose mind and heart have long dwelt upon the past history and the future destiny of his people. The great prophet's thought centers with fervent intensity upon two sublime conceptions. The first is that of the nature and character of God; the second concerns the mission of Israel in its relationship to the divine plan of human redemption. Standing at the crossroads of Hebrew history and of the religious movements of the age, this notable seer of the exile saw the noble spiritual faith, which his prophetic predecessors had long since proclaimed, in its larger aspects. He saw that it was in reality the common denominator of all living religions. God, he perceived, was being worshiped ignorantly and idolatrously, but out of a hunger which was common to all mankind.[3]

These observations became for him the basis not only of a monotheism but of a universalism which offered a new foundation for the religious thought of the future. Two aspects, however, of this developing conception required further interpreta-

[1] The influence, accordingly, of Zoroastrianism upon Judaism, and later upon Christianity, can scarcely be overestimated. This fact will be more clearly shown in the next chapter of our story.

[2] The inference here is not that Israel's work was completely done; but only that a period of preparation, successfully endured, now lay definitely behind. In reality the great task of the Hebrew people as the ministering servant of Jehovah still was to be accomplished. See Is. LIII.

[3] Read Is. XL; Note especially v. 20.

tion. They were inherent in the whole problem of the bearing of religion upon life, and involved the dual question of God's power and His plan to save the world. Even when it had become apparent that Jehovah was the one true God, and that He was being sought everywhere among the nations and peoples of the earth, a practical difficulty was still to be overcome. Was God Himself, like man, helpless toward the realization of His own plan of human redemption; or, though all-powerful, was He unconcerned in the presence of human suffering? The answer of the Second Isaiah is adequate and convincing. It is given noblest expression in Isaiah XL and LIII. Chapter XL presents a marvelous picture of the incomparable greatness of God. Man, in his flesh, is as the summer grass. Jehovah, on the contrary, is at once the sovereign of the universe and the gentle and tender shepherd of His earthly children. Chapter LIII is probably the most advanced statement of religious thought to be found in the Old Testament. It introduces to the reader the idea of a suffering God Who is Himself in anguish and sorrow over the consequences of man's sin. Man is not only a sinner; he is the victim of the curse that sin has laid upon him. It is a curse from which God's own sacrifice alone can set him free. God Himself must therefore provide the world with a saviour. The prophet calls this saviour the Servant of Jehovah.

Here, then, is the interpretation of the writer's conception of Israel's mission. Israel is to be God's agent for human redemption. The sufferings which the Hebrew people have thus far undergone, have done more than serve as an experience of moral and spiritual chastening; their successful endurance has equipped the race for a special providential task. Israel, which has ever been a God-choosing people, has at last itself been especially chosen of God. The choice has not been one of arbitrary preferment. It has been made possible by Israel's own training and voluntary self-surrender. Therefore the nation, even in its own death, will be numbered among the great of the earth; for, with the consummation of its act of self-sacrifice, it will have given the world its long-hoped-for and needed Messiah.[1]

[1] See especially Chap. LIII:12. How clearly and inevitably the whole chapter

The Second Isaiah's picture of the future Messianic kingdom is vividly outlined. Its background is furnished by the rise of Cyrus, the deliverance of the waiting exiles, and the restoration of the Jewish community. The setting is on Palestinian soil with Zion as the special place of interest. The prominent figures are the noble saints of Judah awaiting the divine commission with which to undertake their task. At the center of the picture is the divine figure of the Messiah, the personification of vicarious suffering and of immortal love. Above and surrounding the whole scene is the glory of Jehovah, Who is Himself the king of the earth and the welcomed ruler of the lives of men. The title or theme of the picture is world brotherhood. It is a picture of a new era and a new world, of a regenerated society and a redeemed humanity, of universal peace and good-will, and, last of all, of God Himself establishing His own dwelling place upon earth and living fully and eternally in the hearts of men.[1]

found its fulfilment in Jesus Christ has in our study by this time already become apparent.

[1] See particularly Chap. XLII:1–4; and XLV:20–23.

Mention should here be made of the difference of opinion which exists as to whether the Second Isaiah was a resident of Babylon or of Palestine. Among those who choose Palestine are Cornill, Cheyne, Duhm, H. P. Smith, and C. F. Kent. Skinner, Dillman, and Driver, e. g., however, incline definitely toward a preference for a Babylonian or exilic background for Isaiah XL–LV. Isaiah LVI–LXVI, attributed by Duhm and Cheyne, in 1892 and 1895, to a third, or Trito-Isaiah, are clearly of postexilic times. More specifically, they belong somewhere between 500 and 450 B. C., and therefore not very long after the building of the second temple.

CHAPTER XV

THE JUDEAN COMMUNITY UNDER PERSIAN RULE

THE fall of Babylon was welcomed by the faithful exiles as a timely fulfilment of prophecy. When judgment was at last meted out to Judah's hated oppressor, the voice of the prophetic watchman was heard throughout the colony: "Fallen, fallen is Babylon! The morning cometh." [1] A new day had indeed dawned. A great historical crisis was ended. The prominent world figure whom Jehovah had employed to bring deliverance to Judah was Cyrus. As we have already intimated, the great Persian was worthy of the honor which subsequent Biblical history accorded him. Out of his own magnanimity and for reasons of statesmanship, he reversed the hitherto popular political policy of building an empire by military force and adopted in its stead the more advanced and humane principle of good-will. As far as possible he attempted to establish an empire whose government was to be characterized by an effort to secure the consent of the governed. In proof of this principle his first step was to issue an edict affecting all the colonists who had been deported to Babylon during the Chaldean rule. The edict is found recorded in the sixth chapter of the book of Ezra, where it is preserved in the popular Aramaic tongue instead of the classical Hebrew which is the general language of the Old Testament.[2]

[1] Is. XXI:1–12, like Is. XIII:2–XIV:23, is an interpolation. It belongs to a time later than that of Isaiah of the eighth century. Similar to many another priceless fragment of O. T. literature, it found its way into a larger collection of Biblical writings, there to be preserved for all future time. Unless taken out of their present misplaced position and given their correct and natural historical setting, these fragmentary passages present insurmountable interpretative difficulties.

[2] The edict has likewise been preserved in the private inscription of Cyrus—known as the Cylinder of Cyrus—in the following words: "The cities on the other side of the Tigris, whose sites were of ancient foundation,—the gods who dwelt in them, I brought back again and caused them to dwell in their habitation for all

PALESTINE AFTER THE EXILE
538 - 4 B.C.
and
IN THE TIME OF CHRIST
4 B.C. - 30 A.D.
THE GREAT SEA
PHOENICIA
ITUREA
TRACHONITIS
PANIAS
BATANEA
AURANITIS
PLAIN of SHARON
SAMARIA
DECAPOLIS
PEREA
JUDEA
IDUMEA
SALT SEA
NABATEANS
Sidon
Sarepta
Tyre
Ptolemais
Damascus
Caesarea Philippi
Waters of Merom
Seleucia
Gischala
Ramah
Capernaum
Bethsaida
Julias
Magdala
Tibenas
Gerasa
Hippos
Gamala
Cana
Nazareth
Mt. Tabor
Abila
Kanata
Gadara
Dora
Megiddo
Bethabara
Jezreel
Dium
Caesarea
Mt. Gilboa
Scythopolis
Pella
En-gannim
Salim
Aenon
Samaria
Ragaba
Amathus
Gerasa
Mt. Ebal
Sychar
Jacob's Well
Shechem
Mt. Gerizim
Apollonia
R. Jabbok
Antipatris
Joppa
Arimathea
Phaesadis
Archelais
Ephraim
Lydda
Modin
Bethel
Philadelphia
Jamnia
Gazara
Ekron
Emmaus
Jericho
Julias
Jerusalem
Bethany
Heshbon
Ashdod
Bethlehem
Herodium
Eleutheropolis
Beth-zur
Machaerus
Hebron
Dibon
Gaza
R. Arnon
Raphia
Beersheba
Masada
Battenhouse & Leitzel

The event took place in 538 B. C. With it began the Persian period in Hebrew history. The period continued for two centuries and ended in 333 B. C. with the eastward advance of Alexander the Great. Thereafter, for a century and a half, Palestine came under Greek rule, which was terminated by the rise of the Maccabean state. A century after that Rome appeared on the scene, and Palestine remained in its grip until the close of the era of Biblical history.

The principal historical sources for the study of the period are the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. These two writings were originally one book. They form the natural continuation of the narrative of First and Second Chronicles of which, in the beginning, they were an organic part. The editorial author, who is now known only as the Chronicler, lived about 300 B. C. He set himself to the task of preparing a history of the Hebrew people similar to that represented by the books of Samuel and Kings, with which it generally runs parallel, and upon which, for its information, it is largely dependent.[1] The purpose of the Chronicler was to view Israel's history from the standpoint of the rise and development of its institutional life. His emphasis upon the sacrificial system of religious worship, and upon the priestly elements in the Mosaic law, is evidence that he was a member of the small but influential party of Jewish isolationists whose policies, as time passed, more and more determined the developing tendencies of Judaism. Of all the illustrious characters of Hebrew history none interests him more than Ezra. Moses, David, and Solomon alone compare with him in religious importance. Ezra is, in fact, himself regarded as the second Moses through whom the priestly law was first codified and adopted, and later preserved as sacred literature for all time to come. By the side of him Nehemiah, who is in all respects the more ener-

time. All their inhabitants I collected and restored to their homes." Rogers, Cuneiform Parallels to the O. T., p. 383.

[1] The Samuel-Kings narrative concentrates upon the period of the rise and fall of the Hebrew kingdom. The Chronicler, on the other hand, makes a brief sketch of the earliest historical beginnings and continues his survey to the fourth century B. C. Its emphasis is upon the careers of David and Solomon, and upon the history of the southern kingdom of Judah; the history of the northern kingdom of Israel is entirely omitted.

getic, self-sacrificial, resourceful, and life-like of the two leaders of the period, appears incidental rather than essential to the religious progress of the Chronicler's narrative. The author, nevertheless, did his work well. His plea for the development of religious worship without a loss of interest in the moral life was a praiseworthy contribution to his time.

According to the Ezra-Nehemiah record about fifty thousand exiles accepted the invitation of Cyrus to return to Palestine and to begin the building of the temple. The reëstablishment of the Jewish colony was in the hands of two leaders. They were Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the priest. The erection of the temple, after having been successfully begun, was interrupted by the interference of the uninvited neighboring Samaritans. The delay lasted into the reign of Darius I. It was not until twenty-two years after the edict of Cyrus that the sacred structure was finally completed.[1] Then, according to the Chronicler's history, a period of fifty years followed during which the members of the Judean community were learning to adjust themselves to the changed conditions of Palestinian life. They were years of hardship made endurable by hope. At their expiration Ezra appeared upon the scene. He had come from Babylon, bringing with him another company of exiles and a revised edition of the Mosaic law. The law, after being read and adopted, became the basis of a priestly reform. Drastic measures were enacted by Ezra against certain social practices, particularly that of intermarriage with the neighboring foreign peoples of Palestine. After him came Nehemiah who built the broken walls of Jerusalem. In conclusion Ezra again appeared and, calling a solemn assembly, publicly read the law to the people and dedicated the wall. With his ministry thus ended he disappeared from public view.[2]

The Chronicler's narrative, as thus outlined, presents a generally accurate picture of Jewish religious life as it was about one hundred years after the return of the exiles from Babylon.

[1] I. e., in 516 B. C.

[2] This, it is to be remembered, is the Chronicler's version of early post-exilic history. The present day reconstructed account differs considerably from it, as is noted immediately hereafter.

The temple, the wall, the priest, and the law,—these were the four sacred symbols of Judaism. With the gradual disappearance of prophecy they came more and more to stand for the presence of God. They kept alive the spirit of worship and of moral obedience. They gave distinction, protection, and courage to the struggling post-exilic community.

In order, however, to get a comprehensive view of the whole Persian period it is necessary to reconstruct the Biblical narrative upon the basis of the entire body of collected and chronologically adaptable literary materials. The principal sources for this task are the so-called personal memoirs of Nehemiah, the Aramaic document in the book of Ezra, and the prophetic writings of Haggai and Zechariah. In addition to these, there are the books of Malachi, Joel, Jonah, Ruth, and Job; likewise Chapters LVI–LXVI in the book of Isaiah, and certain of the post-exilic Psalms. Moreover, valuable aid for the study of the period may be gained from a knowledge of the Apocryphal book of First Esdras and of the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus.[1] The writings of the time are thus found to be abundant. The historical information they convey, however, is incidental rather than direct. A great deal is definitely known about the spiritual struggles and vicissitudes of the Judean community during this period. Little, by comparison, can be said with complete certainty of the historical background of these trying experiences. But this little is important.

I. THE MESSIANIC OUTBURST

The first return of exiles, following the generous decree of Cyrus, was under the leadership of Sheshbazzar, a prince and a descendant of the royal line of David. Those who accompanied him on the journey to Palestine were not from the class of the well-to-do colonists of Babylon. They were among the poor and the more patriotic whose hope and dream of Palestine had

[1] The memoirs of Nehemiah are easily recognizable by their use of the literary first person. The Aramaic document in Ezra is found in Chap. IV:8–VI:18. The history of Josephus here referred to his "Antiquities." The book of Esther, dated in the late Persian period, probably belongs to the early Maccabean age.

survived Judah's national disaster. The number was small. The route chosen for them led at first upward along the Mesopotamian valley to Syria, and thence down the plain of the Jordan to Judah. The chief towns occupied by them, in addition to Jerusalem, were Gibeon, Bethlehem, Anathoth, Ramah, Bethel, and Jericho. Community life was at once established, and Sheshbazzar, acting as the Persian representative, became its political governor. The plan of the Judean settlers was to begin at once to till the soil and then to proceed to the rebuilding of the temple. The latter hope, however, was frustrated by the impoverished condition of the community. Contemporary with this handicap a bitter feud arose between the zealous Judaites and the neighboring inhabitants of Samaria. The Samaritans were denied the right of a share in the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The Babylonian experience had intensified and thus narrowed the religious life of the Jews. The tendency among them was henceforth more and more toward racial and religious isolation. It is evident from the Chronicler's account that, at the time of his writing, the schism which later ensued was already complete, and that thereafter the people of Judah had no dealings with the Samaritans.

About this time there occurred certain events which gave rise to sudden Messianic expectations. The Persian empire faced the danger of territorial insurrection. Some of the provinces were already in open revolt. Cambyses the monarch was in Egypt seeking to carry out negotiations with this strong western power. Then, to add to the confusion, serious trouble arose at home. Rivals and pretenders contended their claims for the Persian throne. The fear of anarchy and rebellion drove Cambyses to suicide.[1] It was not until 520 B. C. that Darius I, who rose to meet the crisis in the empire, succeeded in restoring peace and order at home and abroad.

During the same year, after a silent interval of fifty years, the voice of prophecy was again heard on the streets of Jeru-

[1] This was in 521 B. C. He had succeeded Cyrus on the throne in 529 B. C. Darius I reigned from 521 to 485 B. C. He was followed by Xerxes I, who ruled from 484 to 464 B. C. Artaxerxes I, who came next, was king from 464 to 424 B. C. This was the period of Nehemiah.

salem. Two prophets appeared simultaneously to announce that the time had come to rebuild the temple. These two prophets were Haggai and Zechariah. The crisis in the empire had suggested to them that the Judean community was on the threshold of a new age. Ezekiel had warned the exiles to be expectant even while they were patient. From all appearances the critical but long-hoped-for day had come. The Babylonian colonists who desired to do so had again found their way to Palestine. The soil had been put under cultivation, and the more prosperous citizens among them were beginning to build and live in comfortable homes. The temple alone lay in ruin. Without it, religious worship was incomplete. Without it, too, faith, freed from the incentive to sacrifice, was in danger of sinking into a common and sordid complacency. The poor crops and retarded general prosperity of the community were the natural consequence of the people's neglectful ingratitude. Let the temple be built and the Messianic era will come. The way is now definitely prepared. Even the prince of the house of David, in the person of Zerubbabel, is on the ground, having arrived from Babylon in order to be Judah's leader in the new enterprise.

The messages of Haggai and Zechariah produced gratifying results. Within a few weeks work was begun on the temple foundation. Zerubbabel assumed general charge of the task, assisted by Joshua the high priest. A month passed. Haggai, whose words of encouragement were greatly needed, remained close at hand. Then, quite suddenly and unexpectedly, the enterprise came to a halt. The interruption was traceable to two causes. The first was the interference of the neighboring Samaritans who, claiming racial and religious kinship with the inhabitants of Judah, were eager to have a share in the new undertaking. The offer was rejected. The priestly party, under Joshua's leadership, declared against every form of foreign alliance. The prophet Isaiah's principle of faith and allegiance to Jehovah was distorted and applied with a vengeance. The conception of Israel's world mission as proclaimed by the Second Isaiah of the exile was all but lost. Prophecy was on the decline and Judaism

was fast becoming a mere religion of the ritual and the law. The delay of the temple project had, however, a further and deeper cause. It was the sudden discouragement into which the builders and onlookers had fallen. The plan of the building, now generally visible from the outlined structure, was deeply disappointing by contrast with the glory of the great temple of Solomon. The contrast typified the difference between Israel's past and present. At this juncture Haggai once more appeared. He assured the people that God had not forsaken them, and that the glory of the kingdom of the future would transcend that of the past.

The citizens of Jerusalem were, from all appearances, but slowly recovering from the sudden shock which had befallen them, when the voice of Zechariah began to be heard on the streets of the city. He was a gifted preacher, and his message was received with stirring surprise. The still restless state of the Persian empire, the presence of Zerubbabel the descendant of David, and the community's willingness to build the temple, were signs that the Messianic age, so long anticipated, was actually at hand. The enthusiasm with which these signs were accepted may easily be imagined. All Judah must have found itself in a state of acute excitement. The news of what this enthusiasm presaged probably spread rapidly, first to the now offended and envious Samaritans, and then to the political centers of the far-off government of the empire. What happened thereafter can only be conjectured. A complete historical record here fails us. We may suppose that later writers, looking back upon the tragic outcome, preferred to pass it over in silence. It stood out, in Israel's history, as another dark moment following the earthward crash of a premature Messianic hope. A clue to a knowledge of the outcome is, nevertheless, given us in the book of Zechariah.[1] The prophet seems himself to have been called upon to lead the Messianic movement. Zerubbabel and Joshua were publicly crowned, the former king, the latter

[1] Chap. VI:9–15. Why should there be two crowns for Joshua the priest? Again, who but Zerubbabel could have been meant in verse 12 by the reference to the "Branch"? See Zech. III:8, where Joshua could not have been meant. The Hebrew text has evidently undergone later editorial changes.

spiritual adviser or high priest. Then, probably through the embittered Samaritans, the central authority of the empire was invoked. The movement collapsed. Zerubbabel's name thereafter disappears from the historical record. The most natural inference is that he was taken captive and murdered.

II. THE SUFFERING COMMUNITY

It took the Jewish community seventy years to recover from the disappointing shock. These years represent a wide and almost silent gap between two important periods.[1] The interval is marked by no historical Old Testament narrative. Two collections of prophetic literature, however, survive which tell us of the suffering and despondency which hung as a lowering cloud before the eyes of the faithful patriots. They are the prophecies found in Isaiah LVI–LXVI and in the book of Malachi. The Isaiah chapters reflect the spirit of the early years of the period.[2] There is in them the same pathetic emphasis upon ritualistic religion and a passion for righteousness which characterize the time of the exile. Summed up in the form of an argument they culminate in the following plea: Judah has tried to be faithful; why has God permitted her to be made the victim of the foreign oppressor?

The utterances of Malachi sound a new note of hope.[3] Better times are at hand. Faith, repeatedly crushed to earth, has again risen. Malachi is a brave spirit in a still dark age. He valiantly defends the character and providential purpose of God in the presence of a questioning and skeptical people. Does Judah doubt the care or love of God? If so, Malachi undertakes to ask if Judah is really worthy of the special divine favor or protection which she so insistently demands. Let her be reminded

[1] The interval lasted from the dedication of the second temple, in 516 B. C., to the time of Nehemiah, in 444 B. C.

[2] Except Chapters LX–LXII, which best fit into the time of the rise of Alexander (c. 333 B. C.) and his conquest of Asia. The fall of the Persian empire gave renewed cause for the revival of the Messianic hope.

[3] Malachi means "My Messenger." The identity of the author of the book is unknown.

(1) of her hateful attitude toward Edom, or (2) of her neglect of the temple sacrifices, or (3) of the social sins committed by her, particularly the practice of divorce, or (4) of her arrogance in passing contemptuous judgment upon the character and acts of God, or (5) of her sin of expecting Jehovah's special blessing even while she is robbing Him of the special sacrifice which is due Him through the gift of the tithe.[1] In every instance the case is against Judah. Two wrongs do not make a right. To protest righteousness in the face of these indictments and, in addition, to find fault with the providence of God, is sinful and foolish. But that is not the end of Malachi's message. The prophet is a man of genuine faith and courage. He refuses to believe that Jehovah has forsaken His people. The Day of Jehovah is indeed not far off. To the wicked it will mean a terrible judgment; but to those who remain true to the end of their trials it will be a day of vindication and of joy, marked by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness who shall come with healing in his wings.[2]

Malachi occupies a middle ground between the Old Testament prophet and the sage. Prophetic interest in moral reform, apocalyptic vision, priestly regard for temple worship, and the problem interest of the wisdom philosopher, are all combined by him in a single book.[3]

The writing of pure wisdom, which is the natural sequel to the Second Isaiah and Malachi, is the book of Job. The common theme of these three literary productions is the suffering Jewish community. The book of Job is in every respect a masterpiece. Its style and historical setting are dramatic; in its religious and moral conceptions it is sublime. The author lived and wrote, as did Malachi, during the long interval of popular despondency which separated the dedication of the second temple

[1] See the following five references in which Malachi makes his searching statements: Chap. I:2–5; I:6–II:9; II:10–16; II:17–III:6; and III:7–12.

[2] Mal. III:13–IV:3.

[3] Note, in passing, the various types of religious leadership: e. g., Elijah, the seer; Amos, the social prophet; Isaiah, the orator and statesman; Jeremiah, the character-prophet; Ezekiel, the prophet-priest; Second Isaiah, the philosophical poet-prophet; Malachi, the prophetic sage; and Ezra, the scribe.

and the coming of Nehemiah.[1] The problem, as he viewed it, involved the justice or goodness of God, and centered in the question: Why does God permit a righteous man to suffer? In his process of bold reasoning he confronted squarely the age-old doctrine that prosperity was a sign of righteousness and that suffering was a punishment for sin. This doctrine had been taught by the earliest of Israel's great prophets. It appeared to have been verified by the tragic historical experiences of the Hebrew nation. In spite of adversity, it had been the refuge of the pure and pious spirits during and following the exile. Haggai and Zechariah had made it, in part, the basis of their plea for the building of the second temple. It had the endorsement of general popular approval. Was it inviolably true? The writer of Job did not think so. Nor was he alone in his heroic challenge of the revered doctrine. The prophet Habakkuk, two centuries before, had been disturbed by the difficulties it presented. He, too, had asked: Why do the wicked triumph, and the righteous suffer? He had found a satisfying answer in the revealed assurance that righteousness is its own reward.[2] The unknown author of Isaiah LIII had come to the conclusion that the suffering of a righteous man typifies God's own sacrificial effort to redeem a lost world. Malachi, harassed by the questionings of those who thought it vain to worship Jehovah, found an answer for them in an apocalyptic vision of ultimate divine justice.[3] Poets, like the authors of Psalms XXII, LX, and CXXX, likewise wrestled with the problem, but found, instead of a satisfactory solution, only utterance for deep pathos and despair.

The writer of the book of Job regards the problem not racially, but from a purely individual and at once broadly humanitarian point of view. While eager for a solution, he is, first of all, intent upon a discovery of the truth. The narrative portion of the book centers upon a notable character of ancient times. His name is Job.[4] Two things are known of him: the first is

[1] I. e., 516–444 B. C.
[2] Hab. II:4.
[3] Mal. III:13–16.
[4] See Ezekiel XIV:14–20 for a reference to Job.

that he is exceedingly rich; the second that he is genuinely religious. The author accepts the two facts. He is interested, however, in their mutual relationship. Are men religious because they are rich? Or are they rich because they are religious? The prose section of the book presents a picture of disinterested goodness, a goodness not conditioned on the promise of reward, but based on faith in God. Job is indeed rewarded for his piety, but not until it has stood the test of faith. The prosecuting officer, who is a member of the assembled council of heaven and whose peculiar task it is to test men for their pretended goodness, is Satan. The concept of his character and place in Hebrew religious thought was one of only recent development. Together with the whole developing theology of angels, it was an inheritance from the Babylonian exile. That much of it was the result of Jewish contact with the religious philosophy of Persia,[1] present day Biblical scholarship has made increasingly clear.

In the poetical portion of the book of Job the author faces directly the question, not of unrewarded goodness, but of unacknowledged moral integrity. Job does not demand a reward for his piety, but simply a recognition of his sense of innocence. He does not curse God because he is afflicted, but because he is considered, and himself at first feels, forsaken of God. His friends find the proof of their assertion in Job's own suffering. He himself cannot deny either the physical pain or the spiritual anguish, but he protests his innocence. The so-called comforters [2] were wrong in their opinion regarding his guilt; they were right

[1] Zoroaster (c. 660–583 B.C.), Persia's great prophet, though a monotheist and a worshiper of Ahura Mazda, the supreme God of light, life, truth, and goodness, taught the existence of Angra Mainyu, a hostile spirit contending with Ahura Mazda for world supremacy. This cosmological dualism is clearly reflected in the angelology and demonology of post-exilic Biblical history. Prior to the exile the concept of Jehovah was sufficiently all-embracing to account even for the origin of evil. It was Jehovah Himself Who hardened the heart of Pharaoh. The concept of Satan seems almost certainly to have been a Hebrew importation from Zoroastrianism. See Hume: The World's Living Religions, pp. 190–211.

[2] We should probably call Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar fault-finders rather than comforters. They represent three distinct types of approach to the problem. "Eliphaz is the diplomatist; Bildad, the traditionalist; Zophar, the dogmatist."

in saying that he could find no solution for his personal problem by thinking of himself alone. Man must regard himself, together with his sorrows and sufferings, as a part of the great scheme of things. Job realizes when he comes to the conclusion that he is, after all, not alone. Nor does this life stand by itself alone. It is but part of eternity. Man must not look for complete vindication here. Justice demands a life after death. In that life, Job dares to believe, character will come to be judged for its own true worth. Earth's losses will be redeemed.[1] Job's glimpse into the future beyond death is only momentary, but it is real. His faith ventures that man is immortal. Through him the author, in looking for a solution to this problem of suffering, takes a step in advance of current Hebrew thought.

The Old Testament had as yet no developed doctrine of immortality. There had been faint glimmerings of a shadowy hereafter, but no belief in individual or personal existence after death. The devout Hebrew of ancient times contented himself with the promise of racial immortality and with the perpetuity of his good name and influence. The change came in the time of the exile. It is clearly evident in the tone of certain chapters in the book of Ezekiel.[2] Jeremiah, during the closing years of Judah's political independence, had turned the religious mind of the Hebrew people from national to individual considerations. The Babylonian and Persian influences here, too—as in the case of the conception of a Messiah or Saviour and the doctrine of angelology—had contributed their part.[3]

[1] See Job XIX:25–27.

[2] See especially Chap. XXXVII.

[3] The word "Messiah" is used in Is. XLV:1 with reference to Cyrus who was a Zoroastrian. That among the Zoroastrians there were those who were looking for a Messiah among the Jews is indicated by the story of the visit of the Magi at the birth of Jesus. The belief in immortality was clearly taught by Zoroaster himself. Zoroastrianism taught the ultimate victory of good over evil. The punishment of evil demanded a day of judgment; the rewarding of goodness involved a belief in the resurrection. Out of these beliefs came the Persian doctrines of heaven and hell, which are found to be similar to those of the closing years of O. T. History. The word "Paradise" is itself of Persian origin. It is not necessary to suppose, however, that these conceptions are entirely of foreign birth. The advanced ethical monotheism of Old Testament prophecy may have been itself capable of producing and developing them on Palestinian soil.

When later Job again wrestles alone with his problem and his outraged sense of justice, he enters upon a new experience. In the voice which comes to him out of the whirlwind he hears the true judgment of God. Job realizes that, though he may be blameless in his integrity, he is not faultless in his reasoning. God's ways are not man's ways. Man's life may serve higher purposes which go far beyond his power to anticipate. Nature itself, interpreted as a self-revelation of God, reveals a glory and a completeness which make Job's impetuously uttered challenges seem petty and wrong. He discovers that he has been guilty of the sin of rebellion against God. Life is a mystery. Its essential worth must be accepted by man's act of faith. Such faith is justified, as Job learns in the end, by the fact that his life is in God's hand. God has not forsaken him; on the contrary, He has stood by Job in the midst of the whirlwind of his own soul. Of this truth Job becomes conscious as men are conscious of persons whom they meet face to face. His heart melts in penitence and trusting self-surrender.

The author of this book does not offer a formal solution to his problem.[1] So far as he can see there is none. He is a sage and not a prophet. Moreover he is a typical spokesman of his time. There were in his day no outward signs productive of religious enthusiasm. But for the noble writer it was enough that God was in the storms among the nations. God had been made sufficiently real to him; henceforth he could take life completely on trust. In so doing he represented the religious attitude of the noblest souls of the Judean community during the first post-exilic period. It was a time when the Hebrew state was fast becoming a church, and religion its all-absorbing interest. The

[1] The teachings of the book of Job vary with its parts. In the prologue suffering appears as a test of moral character; in the speeches of Job's friends it is regarded as a just punishment for sin; in the speeches of Jehovah it is perceived to be a part of the great mystery of the universe and of life. The book, in its present form, falls into six parts: (1) Chapters I–II, a prose prologue; (2) Chap. III, Job's introductory speech; (3) Chapters IV–XXXI, the speeches of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar; (4) Chapters XXXII–XXXVII, the speeches of Elihu; (5) Chapters XXXVIII–XLI, the speeches of Jehovah in the whirlwind; (6) Chap. XLII, a prose epilogue. The speeches of Elihu, which differ only from those immediately preceding them, belong to a later time, probably the Greek period.

prophetic spirit still survived, but it was being put to the test of the practical religious philosophy of the sage. Sorrow mingled with hope, and skepticism with trust. The future looked dark, and spiritual incentive was lost in profound brooding. A new hope was needed, and it was found in apocalypse; a new standard for religious activity was sought and found in the ceremonial law. The standard bearers of the new movement were Ezra and Nehemiah.

III. THE PRIESTLY REFORM

Of these two reformers the first to appear was Nehemiah. His coming awakened the hope of an approaching better day. The story as preserved, in part, in the form of Nehemiah's own personal memoirs, is full of genuine interest. In addition to being notable for its historical authenticity, it has all the qualities of a literature of optimism. The initial scene is laid in the far eastern city of Shushan at the seat of the royal court of Artaxerxes I.[1] Information came to the young cup-bearer of the king that Jerusalem, the city of his fathers, lay defenseless and its wall in ruins. Granted a leave of absence, and equipped with a military escort and a decree of authority from the king himself, he set out on the long journey to Palestine.[2] Upon his arrival he made a night tour of the ruined city. Work was begun immediately and according to a well-ordered plan. Nehemiah regarded the building of the wall as a community task. Accordingly he invited all able-bodied citizens to participate in the undertaking, and soon the breaches, through which nearly a century and a half before the army of Nebuchadnezzar had entered the city, began to close. Notable undertakings rarely escape opposition. Nehemiah, however, did not permit either the priests of the city or the jealous and hostile neighbors of Judah to deter him from his task.[3] His simple but sagacious re-

[1] The reign of Artaxerxes I extended from 465 to 425 B. C.

[2] The distance traveled was about 1500 miles.

[3] The opposition from without was under the combined leadership of Tobiah the Ammonite, Geshem the Arabian, and Sanballat, a native of Beth-horon, and the able governor of Samaria. Ammon lay to the east of Judah, Arabia to the south, and Samaria to the north.

ply to those who secretly plotted his capture and murder reveals his character.[1] His influence among the people to whom he was sent at this critical time was marvelous. His very presence was an inspiration to them. It stirred the builders to intense activity. Everybody had a mind to work. Half of the men built while the other half stood guard in arms. In fifty-two days the wall was completed amid festive celebration and thanksgiving. One-tenth of the rural population was given a place of residence within the protected city.

Nehemiah then turned his attention to measures of urgent social and religious reform. By his own self-sacrificial example he succeeded in abolishing an evil system of usury, whereby, through a loan of money to seed the fields and pay the royal taxes, the rich oppressed the poor.[2] Thereafter, for twelve years [3] he served as governor of Judah and as a religious leader in the community. His achievements during this time were carefully recorded by him in his own later memoirs. At the expiration of his term of office he returned to Shushan with a report of the success of his mission.

Several years later Nehemiah again visited Jerusalem.[4] The work of reform which he undertook at this time was threefold: (1) he brought about a reorganization of the temple finances upon the basis of the traditional tithe; (2) he reintroduced a strict observance of the Sabbath by the closing of the city gates and by forbidding the day to be spent in the pursuit of trade; (3) he took a definite stand against the growing Judean custom of mixed marriages, quoting in defense of his position the undeniable evil example of king Solomon whose foreign wives did not aid in making him a better king or worthier character.

Nehemiah stands out as one of the compelling figures of the

[1] See Neh. VI:3.

[2] Neh. V.

[3] From 444 to 432 B. C.

[4] Here, in Neh. XIII, we follow the Chronicler's revision of Nehemiah's original memoir. The historical authenticity of the record is for this reason not universally accepted. It appears, however, in the main, to be in keeping with the character and work of the great reformer. See C. F. Kent, Historical Bible, Vol. IV, p. 124.

post-exilic period. He was the product of the noblest spiritual influences of the Hebrew exile. His preserved patriotism amid royal foreign surroundings, his humility unspoiled by his own consciousness of strength, his self-sacrificial but practical zeal, his masterly diplomacy, and, above all, his refined spirituality are sufficient cause to account for his greatness. Nehemiah did more than build a wall around Judaism. He helped to establish a newly reformed Jewish community. By so doing he contributed greatly toward the preservation and perpetuation of Israel's faith. Together with Ezra, he forms the historical and spiritual connecting link not only between the Jews of Palestine and those of the dispersion, but between the exile and the later Maccabean age.

Upon the basis of information recorded in Nehemiah XII it may be supposed that the mission of Ezra followed that of Nehemiah.[1] The name of Ezra is associated in Biblical history with the priestly reformation which about this time converted Judaism into a religion of the law. His journey to Jerusalem probably took place early in the reign of Artaxerxes II, that is, about 400 B. C. Though a native of Babylon, he had not, like Nehemiah, come under the influence of the free spirit of cosmopolitanism. He brought with him to Palestine the exilic ideal of a separate and ritually sanctified Jewish community, as it had been taught by the prophet Ezekiel and especially cherished since the building of the second temple. In keeping with this ideal, and presumably with the aid of kindred priestly enthusiasts, Ezra had previously undertaken and completed a revision of the legislative history of the Hebrew people. This edited and recodified copy

[1] The Chronicler, who lived about a century later, dealt freely with the historical material available in the Ezra-Nehemiah record. The date assigned by him to Ezra is 458 B. C., i. e., fourteen years prior to the mission of Nehemiah. According to Neh. XII:36, however, Ezra appears at the close of the period of Nehemiah's governorship. During the interval no mention is made of Ezra in the book of Nehemiah. Nor is Ezra mentioned later, in 200 B. C., by Ben-Sirach in his review of the famous men of Israel, though Nehemiah appears in the list. Quite apart from these considerations, it seems more natural to assume that the work of Nehemiah preceded that of Ezra. The view which regards Ezra a purely idealized character, the personification of the legalistic movement in late O. T. history, is, however, scarcely justified.

of the Mosaic law he carried with him to Jerusalem, there, in fulfilment of Ezekiel's prophecy, to make it the spiritual basis of a reformed Judaistic community.[1] His reformatory undertaking met with immediate success. Its drastic measures were first applied to the institution of marriage. Jewish citizens who had married wives from families among the neighboring states, especially the Samaritans, were compelled, at Ezra's command, to dismiss these wives, together with their children, and to marry women of Jewish parentage. Religious worship was organized into a complete system centering in the institutions of the temple, the sacrifices, and the Levitical priesthood. Degrees of piety originated which were ceremonially determined and ordered to conform to the legalistic barriers which were held to exist between Jew and Gentile, man and woman, Levite and layman, priest and Levite, and high priest and priest.[2] Sacrificial offerings were, generally speaking, of two types: (1) solemn-offerings, for general worship and for the forgiveness of sin; and (2) festive-offerings, for fellowship, supplication, and thanksgiving. The most important of the first type was the burnt-offering, a daily temple sacrifice, symbolical of the worshiper's approach to God, and of a consciousness of the divine presence in daily life. Closely akin to the burnt-offering were: (a) the sin-offering, and (b) the trespass or guilt-offering; the former for harm or wrong that could not be undone, the latter for wrong-doing that could be righted by a gift or an act of restitution. The memorable occasion of the year for the combining of all the solemn sacrifices into one great ritual was the

[1] This revision had much in common with the Book of the Covenant, the Deuteronomic Law, and the Law of Holiness, the three codes already in existence. It differed, however, from them in its emphasis upon ritualistic forms of worship, and a literal interpretation of the law, and more particularly in its substitution of the ideal of an isolated Jewish community for the wide missionary outlook of the late prophetic era.

[2] In the later temple, built by Herod the Great, these distinctions of religious and social rank are clearly set forth. The complete structure was built after the pattern of six courts or chambers, one within another. The outer court was the limit for Gentiles, the second for the women of Judah, the third for Jewish laymen, the fourth for the Levite, the fifth, which was the holy place of the temple, for the priest. The innermost shrine, called the Holy of Holies, was open only to the sacrificing high priest.

Day of Atonement. The celebrated festive sacrifice of such seasons as the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of the Tabernacles, was the peace-offering, an offering of flesh, usually accompanied by the meal-offering, and additional offerings of libation and incense. Solemn-offerings were burnt entirely upon the altar; in festive-offerings the people shared in a joyful feast of religious and social fellowship.[1]

In addition to the law and the sacrifice, a third element entered into the religion of the priestly period. It was the apocalyptic hope. The prophets had taught that Israel was Jehovah's people and, as such, was destined to fulfil a unique mission upon earth. During the exile and immediately thereafter the vicissitudes of the nation were looked upon as a remedial preparation for this task. However, as time passed, and the promises of redemption remained unfulfilled, the noblest spirits of the Jewish community found themselves under the shadow of a depressing and uninterpretable sense of guilt. The thought began to develop that God, in His disappointment, had withdrawn from intimacy of fellowship with His people. The sacrificial offering, which in former years had been primarily a festive celebration, became thus more and more a solemn rite by means of which a deeply penitent people sought to awaken the pitying and forgiving spirit of God. Faithful obedience to the law further strengthened the sense of guilt, and the desire to atone for it through the practical conduct of daily life. The growing doctrine of angelology served to bridge the gap between the humble worshiper and a far-off God. The prophetic conception of the moral majesty of God, as revealed in the order of nature in human history, and in individual experience, gave way to the priestly conception of a transcendent God, holy in His isolation and intimately inaccessible to man.[2] Yet, despite the thought of His temporary withdrawal, Jehovah was not believed to have

[1] For detailed information regarding the sacrificial system of the priestly code, see Hastings Dict. of the Bible, Vol. IV, p. 337.

[2] It was in the spirit of this later conception that the priestly history of the Hebrew people, the history designated P, was written. The priestly historian wrote about 450 B. C. His work formed the basis of the legislative reform of Ezra. About this time, also, it was interwoven with the prophetic and Deuteronomic histories and

forgotten His people, nor to have abandoned His own plan for its future. He was keeping the word of His ancient covenant, and holding in store its deserved and promised blessings. The author of the book of Job had come to a conclusion which had vindicated the righteous judgment of God. The priestly historian, outlining the origin of the world, of mankind, and of evil, and tracing the history of the Hebrew nation from its beginning to its end, had come to rest upon a similar assurance. With the past thus interpreted and secure, the task of the apocalyptic prophet was clearly outlined. He was to be the new champion of the righteousness and conquering power of Jehovah for the ages yet to come. He looked into the future,

> "far as human eye could see;
> Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be,"

and called the consummation of it the realized Messianic kingdom.[1] Its coming was foreseen by him as a catastrophic event. God Himself would intervene to direct the course of history according to His will. Empires would rise and fall in a day, and the Messianic king would himself truly and triumphantly appear. A new age would follow. The universal rule of God would be established. Peace would reign everywhere and without end. Jerusalem would be exalted among the nations, and the peoples

their associated legal codes to form the Hexateuch or collection of writings constituting the first six books of the Bible.

[1] Apocalypse and Messianism were at this time not new in Israel's history. Both were, however, energetically revived. Apocalypse differs from prophecy, according to Professor R. H. Charles (Hastings' Dict. of the Bible, Vol. I, p. 109), in three respects. (1) Prophecy still believes that this world is God's world, and that in this world His goodness and truth will be justified. The apocalyptist, on the other hand, almost wholly despairs of the present; his main interests are supramundane. (2) Prophecy takes a wider view of the world's history; apocalypse is deterministic and mechanical rather than organic. (3) Apocalyptic writing differs from prophecy in its less sympathetic attitude toward the Gentile world. It is characteristic of apocalypse to present a highly symbolical and colorful picture of a final world judgment, which will be an occasion of deliverance for God's people, made possible through direct divine intervention into the course of nature and of history. Apocalypse is a literature of hope, with the historical background of a great trial and sorrow.

of the earth would turn to Zion to learn the will of God and the way of life.[1]

Thus sustained by the law, the sacrificial worship, and the apocalyptic hope, the devout and loyal members of the Judean community awaited the coming of events which were to mark the close of the Persian period. They had by now become an isolated, a transformed, and a thoroughly lonely people. They were shut off from the further revelation of new religious truth by the practical cessation of prophecy, and from contact with the outside world by an anti-foreign program of social legislation. The spirit of particularism, assiduously fostered, at last came to a climax in the event known as the Samaritan schism. Thereafter Judah stood completely alone. Even those who were its nearest of kin were regarded with contempt. The hated people of Samaria were not slow to reciprocate. Jealousies and provincialism gained the upper hand. The land of promise, once dearly bought with the sacrifices of the Hebrew fathers, was occupied by a generation of descendants almost unworthy of its possession.[2] The hope of Judah's future lay at this time in the hands of its small minority. Among the outstanding individuals of whom this minority was composed were those of the little group of protesters. Two of these attained special recognition through their literary monuments. They were the authors of the books of Ruth and Jonah. The book of Ruth was a protest against the Jewish law which made the foreigner a social outcast. Its writer's aim was to show how Jehovah's blessing had rested, in olden times, alike upon Moabite and Israelite. Ruth,

[1] The most beautiful picture of this Messianic hope is found in Isaiah IX:6–9 and XI:1–10. These prophecies, placed in the early part of the book of Isaiah, are out of their proper historical setting.

[2] The history of the Samaritan schism is remotely traceable to the early tribal jealousies which attended the conquest of Palestine. The fall of Samaria in 722 B. C. intensified the disaffection. The crisis came with the radical reform movement of Ezra. The historian Josephus (Antiq. XI:7 and 8) tells us that a certain Manasseh, a member of a priestly family in Jerusalem, who had married the daughter of Sanballat, the governor of the Samaritans, was compelled by the elders at Jerusalem to choose between divorcing his wife or being deprived of the priesthood. He chose to go with Sanballat who tendered him the office of a high priest. The Samaritans thereafter built a temple on Mt. Gerizim where they adopted the Pentateuch as the basis of their sacred scriptures.

though a Moabitess, became the chosen and noble ancestress of the renowned king David.[1] The story of Jonah is an allegorical parable. It teaches one of the greatest lessons of Old Testament scripture. The prophet Jonah typified Israel. The incident of the whale referred to the Jewish exile. Nineveh stood for the outside Gentile world, hated or ignored by the pious Judeans, but affectionately remembered and protected by Jehovah. Jonah's rebellion was a sad commentary on the spiritual blindness which was creeping upon the Jewish priestly leaders of the community. The prophetic vision had all but disappeared.[2]

Among the people, however, the narrowing of the religious life intensified it. Spirituality, a gift developed throughout the years, remained. The best evidence of this fact is found in the collection of post-exilic Psalms.[3] The period, which marked the establishment of Judaism, witnessed the gradual convergence of six forms or types of religious activity: (1) the adoption of the priestly law; (2) the introduction of the sacrificial ritual of worship; (3) the composition of the priestly history; (4) the beginning of wisdom philosophy; (5) the intensified activity of the apocalyptic prophet; (6) the completion and editorial compilation of the Psalter. The scribe, the priest, the sage, the prophet, and the poet,—all contributed to the production of its notable literature. Among all of these none wrought more intimately and self-revealingly with the inner religious life of the Jewish community than the authors of its Psalms. The Psalms,[4]

[1] The scene of the story of Ruth is laid in the time of the Judges, i. e., c. 1100 B. C. The date of the beautiful religious idyl is c. 350, i. e., some time close to the end of the Persian period.

[2] The close approximation of the parable of Jonah to that of the Good Samaritan in the N. T. is apparent. The character of Jonah finds its counterpart in those of the priest and the Levite. The Jewish-Samaritan schism helps to explain both. As is to be expected, however, the N. T. parable touches life at a still higher moral and spiritual level.

[3] The Psalms which reflect most closely the religious thought of this period are those between XC and CL.

[4] The beginnings of the Psalter, of course, went back to the time of David, c. 1000 B. C. The Wisdom movement, too, had an earlier origin. Examples of Hebrew Wisdom are found in such literary specimens as Judges IX:7–15 and II Kg. XIV:9. King Solomon, according to tradition, was its first distinguished patron. Its most rapid development began with the Greek period, i. e., about 330 B. C.

then in existence, became the hymn-book of the second temple. Some of them, especially those of later composition, were hymns of liturgy. Others expressed, in words of tender grace and beauty, the gratitude of the redeemed and preserved Israelite family. Still others dwelt longingly and prophetically upon the thought of Zion's glorious future. Of these hymns of spiritual devotion and aspiration none is more racially autobiographical and typical than Psalm CXXVI.

CHAPTER XVI

PALESTINE AND THE GREEK WORLD

In the midst of dark days and of enduring hopes the Jewish people found themselves suddenly involved in the collapse of the Persian empire. If this event aroused slumbering Messianic expectations, they were soon dispelled by the appearance in Syria of the army of Alexander.[1] The victory of the Macedonian at the battle of Issus placed in his hands the mastery of the East and opened the period of Greek rule over Palestine.[2] A new age was thus begun, not only in the life of the Hebrew people but in the history of civilization. East met West: first on the field of battle; then in the political arena and the social forum; later in the halls of philosophy, literature, and art; and at last in the temples and at the sacred altars of religion. The political history of the Greek period is of secondary importance. The victories of Greece were those of thought and culture. The story of this chapter in Hebrew history is one of early contact and of subsequent conflict between two widely divergent races and civilizations, two systems of ideas, and two conceptions and outward manifestations of religion. The confluence of these two streams and the mingled content of their current are clearly traceable and distinguishable throughout the course of later history.

I. HELLENISM

The ten years during which Alexander completed the conquest of the Persian empire ended with his death in 323 B. C.

[1] Alexander the Great undertook his conquest of Asia in 333 B. C. Isaiah LX–LXII seems to fit most appropriately into the interim between Persian and Greek supremacy over Palestine.

[2] The Greek period lasted from 333 to 175 B. C. Then followed a century of Jewish independence under Maccabean rule (175–63 B. C.). Thereafter Rome ruled Palestine.

The people of Palestine had accepted his rule without serious remonstrance. Damascus and Sidon had yielded at once; Tyre had resisted, but succumbed; Gaza had capitulated; and Jerusalem, though well fortified, had not dared to rise to oppose him.[1] The Samaritans, accustomed, through past experience, to hostile treatment, and probably satisfied that Judah would not escape submission, had not opposed the Macedonian invasion. Alexander's interest in Palestine had been indeed only incidental. His primary objective had been Egypt of which he made himself the conqueror and where he founded an important city in his own honor.

The influence of Alexandria as a seat of Jewish-Greek learning was destined to become well known. Jews invited to make their residence there welcomed, for the most part, the opportunity of an acquaintance with its new and broadening culture. They were permitted to remain Hebrews while enjoying the full privileges of a typical Greek city. Its cosmopolitanism pleased those who were to become the later representatives, in Palestine, of a more liberal Judaism.

When the disturbance which followed the death of Alexander had subsided, his kingdom was found to have been divided into two parts: Egypt, under the rule of the dynasty of the Ptolemies, and Syria, ruled by the family or dynasty of the Seleucids. Both Ptolemy I and Seleucus had been able generals of Alexander. In 305 B. C. Ptolemy, also named Soter, established himself as king over Egypt; the same year Seleucus founded the city of Antioch, and assumed the title of king of Syria. Palestine, captured by Ptolemy as early as 320 B. C., and given to him by the important treaty of Issus, became, after twenty years of conflict between Egypt and Syria, an Egyptian province.[2] With the exception of two short intervals—in 295 B. C., and again in 219 B. C.—it remained such for the next one hundred years.[3] During the first half of this century the Ptole-

[1] The story told by Josephus, in Antiq. XI:84–7, though suggestive of a probable visit of Alexander to Jerusalem, reflects a national Jewish prejudice.

[2] See Josephus' Antiq. XII:1–2.

[3] i. e., from 300 to 200 B. C.

mies governed Palestine with evident generosity. Ptolemy II, known as Philadelphus, in addition to treating the Jews with kindness and respect was a patron of their literature. The Jewish scholars who lived in Alexandria reciprocated and interested themselves in Greek literature and philosophy. The result was that certain of them began, about this time, under royal patronage, the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures. This translation, known as the Septuagint, almost immediately became a landmark in the history of Biblical study.[1] Its influence upon Judaism was definite and far-reaching. It was the first noteworthy step in the transformative process which afterward came to be known and designated as Hellenism. The Septuagint, in course of time, became the Bible of the Hellenistic or Greek-speaking Jews throughout the Greek world, and later throughout the Roman empire.

Under the rule of the Ptolemies III and IV the Jews of Palestine were less fortunate. The Egyptian court, lapsing into profligacy and degeneration, neglected the provinces in all respects except their heavy taxation. Exorbitant tribute was levied upon Palestine, and charged, for its collection, to the account of the high priest. The office, hitherto conserved for sacred tasks associated with the temple service and social reform, was put to a new secular and civil use. The act marked an unfortunate step. It gave the high priest a temporal power which, associated with his spiritual prerogative, led to opportunities of prompt and vast abuse. Of the nine men who held this office in Judea during the Greek period, only one was worthy of his high trust.[2] This man was Simon the Just, who lived shortly before the time of the Maccabean uprising.[3]

In 198 B. C., under the leadership of Antiochus the Great, the

[1] The Septuagint, generally designated by the letters LXX, was the first historical attempt at Biblical translation. The Pentateuch, or first five books, were completed by 250 B. C.

[2] The story told by Josephus (Antiq. XII:4) of Joseph, the tax-gatherer and nephew of the high priest, who worked under royal protection as a brutal extortioner among his own people, is a good example of the degenerating influences which emanated from Egypt into the province of Judea.

[3] Joshua Ben Sirach, author of the Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus (Chap. L) praises the great and good priest Simon. He lived c. 180 B. C.

Seleucids overcame the Ptolemies in a desperate struggle for the possession of Palestine. For twenty years from that time the little province of Judea was subjected to the determined Hellenizing influence of the Syrian power.[1] From all appearances the political change was at first welcomed. The visit of Antiochus to Jerusalem, his respect for Jewish customs and institutions, and especially the part he took in effecting the settlement of a colony of Jewish Babylonian exiles in Phrygia, gave him a place of general esteem among the liberal-minded Greek-speaking Jews of the province. The conservative leaders of the people, however, those who were the spiritual dscendants of Ezra and Nehemiah, saw in these movements of Antiochus no signs for enthusiasm. They recognized in the free intermingling of Greek and Hebrew ideas a very positive and threatening menace to the future of Judaism. The at one time growing school of apocalyptists, which hailed the coming of Alexander with aroused anticipations of the approaching Messianic kingdom, was temporarily silenced by the increasing dominance of the foreign Gentile power. The result was the emergence, among the adherents of Judaism, of two clearly distinguishable attitudes toward the pervading Hellenistic culture. One class or group, known as the Chasidim, or pious, was wholly opposed to contact between Jew and Greek; the other, the liberal group, welcomed Hellenism, both for its broad civilizing influence and for the opportunity it afforded for the further interpretation and the spread of the Jewish faith. The first class, in the century that followed, developed into the party of the Pharisees; the second, in the course of time, became known as the Sadducees. Each of these two groups of religious leaders produced its own sacred literature. The priestly party, to which the Judean separa-

[1] The chronology of the Greek-Maccabean period may be outlined as follows: (1) The ten years (333–323) of Alexander's conquest and the founding of the empire; (2) twenty years (323–301) of civil strife in settlement of the claims of the Ptolemies and Seleucids; (3) a century (301–198) of slightly interrupted Ptolemaic rule of Palestine; (4) twenty years (198–178) of undisputed rule of the Seleucids; (5) three years (178–175) of bitter religious persecution, followed by the Maccabean revolt, and a century (175–63) of Jewish independence, known as the period of the Maccabean state.

tists gave their unqualified allegiance, became responsible, about this time, for the formation of the Jewish Sanhedrin or senate.[1] The Chronicler's history, it has already been noted, came into being during the early years of the Greek period. The narrative is in reality an ecclesiastical philosophy of history. It was written to justify the characteristic tendencies of Judaism and to trace their origin and growth from the beginning of time. The interests of the writer center upon Jewish institutions. Foremost of these is the temple; next in importance is the law; after that the Hebrew nation.

The intellectual and social leaven of the age, however, was Greek culture. Its pervading influence was present in every form of human endeavor. Thoughtful Jews turned philosophers, or sages, and became the authors and editors of the great wisdom literature of the period. Men of poetic gift wrote not only psalms, but poems of practical human interest, and songs of love. Touched by the humanizing effect of this new culture, Jewish nationalists became cosmopolitans, the sons of priestly puritans developed a love for amusements and games, and men, who once saw only idolatry in art, turned with pleasure to an appreciation of the beautiful. The Greek city, its social customs, and manners of speech and dress; Greek names, adopted by Asiatics, including Jews; Greek literature, sculpture, and architecture; Greek philosophy and religion,—these converted the ancient East into a new world, and, in the course of the years, brought the Judean community face to face with the most severe crisis of its history.

It was during the half century prior to the approach of this crisis that the wisdom writings appeared. The sages who produced them were not philosophers in the Greek sense. The Hebrew mind was not speculative regarding questions of ultimate reality. The fact of God and His relation to the created world lay at the basis of all its reasoning. The sage concerned himself less with the question of origins than with the problem of human destiny. He relied upon experience rather than logic.

[1] The Greek idea of the free city, now gaining currency in Palestine, involved a government with primary authority in the hands of elders or senators.

His temperament was not metaphysical, but ethical and practical. Sometimes his utterances took the form of epigrams in which lay couched the wise counsel of the ages. Sometimes they gave unsparing witness to the cold and puzzling realities of life. Occasionally they rose to poetic heights in the personification and the praise of wisdom. The Biblical books in which the three types of wisdom literature find clearest expression are Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the apocryphal writing called Ecclesiasticus.

The book of Proverbs is a compendium of practical and wise sayings. It is the composite product of five originally independent collections.[1] The oldest of these is found in the present chapters X–XXII. Some of the individual proverbs contained in it probably came from the pen of Solomon. Collectively the book contains the moral philosophy of five centuries of Hebrew life. Its religious character is well voiced by the oft reiterated statement that "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." The book of Ecclesiastes is a startling example of the influence of the Greek age upon Hebrew thought. The writer, who calls himself a "debater" or "lecturer," takes a daringly skeptical and gloomy view of life. His own experience has made him a frankly dissatisfied and disillusioned man. Traditional theology and morality alike bend heavily under the weight of his melancholy brooding. Like Job, he has confronted the problem of life and has found it an enigma. While Job, however, though cast down by suffering and doubt, struggles hopefully onward toward a possible solution, the writer of Ecclesiastes considers it futile to attempt to understand life's mystery and settles down to an attitude of stoic tranquillity. What impresses him most with regard to human life is its utter worthlessness and vanity. He calmly reviews the personal experiences that compel him to this fateful conclusion.

First there is life's deadening sameness, its barren meaninglessness and monotony. Generation follows generation, season follows season in an unprogressive and purposeless cycle, round

[1] The five divisions of the book are the following: (1) Chapters I–IX; (2) Chapters X:1–XXII:15; (3) XXII:17–XXIV; (4) XXV–XXIX; (5) XXX-XXXI.

upon round. Nature shows no trend toward improvement, no trace or sign of the directing or intervening hand of God. Nor is the outlook hopeful in the case of man. Man is born to endless trouble and futile striving. Real knowledge upon the basic problems of life is unattainable. The wisdom which men buy with the price of bitter experience is of no measurable advantage. The wise man must die as the fool; and in the end all are forgotten. There are no rewards because there is no conceivable possibility of justice. The wicked prosper while the righteous suffer and are helpless to redress the wrong. The pleasures of the senses entertain but they do not satisfy. In short, when looking into the future, the writer of Ecclesiastes concludes that life is an uninteresting and dismal failure. Individual sacrifice for future pleasure, for the acquisition of knowledge or wealth, for the cause of justice, or the hope of immortality seem alike in vain. They are a striving after wind, and result only in further vexation of spirit. The only refuge is in the present. His best counsel may be summed up in the words "*carpe diem*"—seize the fleeting moment; put into it as much of good as you can but avoid the penalty of excess.[1]

The author's pessimism reflects the severe test of faith which was the outstanding single characteristic of the Greek period. The light of hope was burning low indeed. But it was not extinguished. Therein lay the miracle of Hebrew history. The Hebrew people could not forget God; hence the greatest among them could not ignore life's moral and spiritual problems. The author of Ecclesiastes was admittedly a bold though calm skeptic, but his thought shows no trace of atheism. Disbelief in God was all but impossible to the Jewish mind. The danger of the period was, in reality, not its doubt; it was the apparent intellectual helplessness and moral lethargy into which the Jewish sages had fallen as a result of their contemplation of the historical fate of their race, in the light of the newly acquired

[1] Traces of the influence of Epicureanism are here plainly evident. Aristotle's doctrine of the golden mean is also brought into view. Some Biblical scholars, on the other hand, note in Ecclesiastes evidences of the stoic doctrine of Zeno who, according to tradition, was a Phœnician and therefore himself of the Semitic race.

pagan ideas. Palestine was perceived to be slowly yielding submission to the conquest of Greek civilization. The weapons of the conqueror were not arms of battle but ideas and ideals. The victory which seemed assured was welcomed by the rising Sadducean party. The puritan party, later known as the party of the Pharisees, however, set itself against the rising tide of Hellenism. The crisis which followed marked the rise of the Maccabean state.

In the meantime the proponents of the new culture were allowed to continue their transformative work. Measurable aid was given to the movement by the writings of such prominent liberal Jews as Ben Sira, the author of the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus. This remarkable book, at first simply known as the Wisdom of Joshua the son of Sirach, was originally written in Hebrew. It was later translated into Greek by the grandson of the author, and almost immediately became a popular classic of unusual religious and scholarly worth. It grew in favor until quotations from it found their way into portions of the New Testament and into the subsequent writings of the church fathers.[1] Together with First Maccabees, it occupies an important place in late Hebrew history, and stands at the head of the collection of Old Testament books known as the Apocrypha.

The book of Ecclesiasticus is a masterly tribute to the religious and moral genius of the Hebrew race. It is a monument to the wisdom which is taught as having its basis in a strong and abiding faith in God. The author gives wisdom its praise and personification, first as a divine emanation and, therefore, as a creative force in the universe; and second as a noble ideal and a trustworthy guide to a moral and godly life.[2] His emphasis upon the Jewish law marks the transition, in late Hebrew history, from the office of the sage to that of the scribe. He occupies a place midway between the wisdom poet who wrote the book of Job and the later rabbi whose writings became the means of a popu-

[1] For an example of the influence of Ecclesiasticus upon the N. T. see the Epistle of James, Chap. I:5 ff.

[2] The author, in elaborating his theme, dwells upon the threefold manifestation of wisdom: (1) in nature; (2) in human history; and (3) in the sacred law.

lar expansion and interpretation of sacred scripture.[1] The book of Ben Sira is proof that by this time the teacher had definitely emerged and become an important factor in the life of the Jewish community. This position of preëminence was maintained by him throughout the closing two centuries of the Old Testament era. In the course of the years, however, the scribe permitted his interest in the more formal and technical aspects of the law to displace the original moral and spiritual passion which gave it meaning and life. As a result he became very familiarly known as a lawyer, an interpreter of a text, a debater, and a defender of the faith, but not as a spiritual creator and a man with a new religious message.

II. THE PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS

The historical period which begins with the Maccabean revolt is made familiar by information from three sources: (1) the book of Daniel; (2) the apocryphal books of First and Second Maccabees; and (3) the history of Josephus known as "The Jewish War". The last of these, despite the historian's evident exaggeration and personal bias, is an unusually interesting and valuable document. It presents an outline of Jewish history from the time of the Maccabean uprising, in 175 B. C., to the final destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D.[2] First Maccabees is a historical work of the first rank. Second Maccabees, though an interpretative historical apology rather than pure history, serves as a helpful guide to the study of this very important period. The Maccabean history covers, in the main, the half century of Jewish life between 185 and 135 B. C.[3] The book of Daniel

[1] The origin of the synagogue is traceable to the late period of the exile. It arose to meet an institutional need for the teaching and interpretation of the law.

[2] The noted Jewish historian lived between 37 and 97 A. D. He was, therefore, a contemporary of the first Christian apostles. He also wrote another work called "The Antiquities of the Jews," a history of the Hebrew people from its beginning almost to his time.

[3] Its most important events and dates are the following: (1) The accession of Antiochus Epiphanes in 175 B. C.; (2) the desecration of the Jewish temple in 168 B. C.; (3) the restoration and rededication of the temple in 165 B. C.; (4) the death of Antiochus in 164 B. C.; (5) the death of Judas in 161 B. C.; (6) Jonathan's

reflects the inner life and the spiritual struggle of the Maccabean age. In a literary sense it is neither history nor prophecy, but apocalypse. The originators of the ancient Hebrew canon placed it among the Biblical writings known as the Hagiographa. Modern scholarship has verified this original classification. A close study of the book has led to the following conclusions: (1) that Daniel, who, together with Noah and Job, is mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel, was, in all probability, a renowned Hebrew historical character; (2) that he—or a later distinguished and saintly man of the same name—lived as an exile in Babylon under conditions similar to those of the Maccabean period; (3) that the words attributed to Daniel do not imply his authorship of the book; (4) that the absence of reference to, or quotations from, the book of Daniel in Jewish literature prior to the second century B. C. is suggestive of its late origin; (5) that the language of the book points to a late date; and (6) that the stories of noble heroism and of spiritual vision which it records fit into no time as well as into the period of the Maccabean crisis.[1] The Book of Daniel treats history symbolically. This literary method, a common characteristic of all apocalyptic writing, gives the author a personal and religious freedom which he could not otherwise have. The narrative and its pictures have a hidden meaning, known only to the spiritually initiated. The key whereby admittance is gained to their inner realm of truth is the popular Messianic hope.

The writer looks out upon the world from the depths of great suffering. The day of a terrible crisis is at hand. The nations of

rule of the Hebrew state from 153 to 142 B. C.; (7) Simon's rule from 142 to 135 B. C.; (8) Seventy years of civil strife among the Maccabean rulers (135–65 B. C.); (9) Pompey's arrival in Syria in 65 B. C.; (10) Palestine made a Roman colony in 63 B. C.

[1] The reference to Daniel is found in Ezek. XIV. The character of Job was similarly chosen by the author of the book which bears his name. The book of Ecclesiastes contains the words, "I the Preacher," similar to the use of the first person in the phrase "I Daniel." Again the book of Daniel contains not only Persian but Greek words, and a whole section is written in the Aramaic. There is little likelihood that a writer living in the Babylonian period would be acquainted with these languages. The author of Daniel, moreover, reveals a somewhat inaccurate knowledge of Babylonian and Persian history.

the earth have risen in brutality and arrogance to rend to pieces and to devour whom they may. Like beasts they rise out of the sea and traverse the land. The first and in many ways the mightiest of these powers is Babylon. It is pictured as a lion with eagle's wings, swift and strong in the pursuit of its prey, and without mercy. The second is the kingdom of the Medes, symbolized by the bear standing erect and holding between his teeth the crushed victim of his awful greed. The third, the kingdom of Persia, is a leopard having, as the sign of its complete and undisputed mastery, four heads and four wings. The fourth and last is a strong and terrible beast without name. Its fierceness is beyond comparison; its teeth are of iron; on its head are the broken stumps of ten horns. In the days of its greatest might it had ravaged and despoiled at its own free will. Then other and stronger powers had arisen and, in the conflicts which ensued, one by one, the horns of the beast were broken from its proud head and trampled to earth. It is readily apparent that the national power symbolized by this unnamed beast is that of the Greeks. For the writer to have spoken outright at this point in his narrative would have been to invite disaster. Safety for his people lay in his use of the parable.

Though shorn of its first strength, the sovereignty of the beast continued unquestioned. The humiliations it experienced only added to its utter fierceness. This was, to the apocalyptic writer, particularly noticeable in the contemptible but arrogant little horn which had latterly sprung from the insolent head of the beast. This little horn had no purpose but to rend and to destroy. Its symbolism, too, is clear. The original ten horns of the beast were ten kings or rulers. The little horn was Antiochus Epiphanes, the hated arch-persecutor of the Jews against whom the Maccabeans soon thereafter rose in irreconcilable revolt. Thus the writer of the book of Daniel presented his readers with the historical background for his message of encouragement and hope. World power was temporarily in the hands of the enemy. The people of the Jewish community could, for the present, best serve God by their strong endurance. For inspiration they were reminded of the heroes of faith who lighted up

the otherwise dark period of the Hebrew exile. Time would bring relief. If history failed, God Himself would intervene. The apocalyptic hope rested securely in the belief in supernatural intervention. Changes, it was felt, were wrought not from within but from above. New ages were ushered in by natural and historical cataclysms. Apocalyptists who confronted moral problems looked for their cosmic solution. They mistrusted social reform. Against evil God's direct power alone could avail. His was the greater glory single-handedly to overcome sin. It was the task of those loyal to Him trustingly to await His coming. His appearance would be with suddenness and might. Glory would shine about His person when, as the Ancient of Days, His throne would be established amid flames of fire, following the destruction of the beasts and their kingdoms of evil. Thereafter peace would reign supreme and without end. The power of evil would give way to the sovereignty of the Son of Man, whom God Himself would send to earth from the clouds of heaven, and whose perpetual kingdom, when complete, would include all the peoples and nations of the earth.[1]

The Jewish community, once favorably disposed toward a reasonable Hellenizing influence, and later warned of its dangers, was at last compelled to rise up in open revolt. The determined policy of Antiochus Epiphanes, the eighth of the Seleucid kings, was to convert Palestine into a typical Greek colony. The Syrian monarch resolved to make Jerusalem a Greek city and its temples a pagan sanctuary. Having arrived at this decision, he lost no time in attempting to carry it to a successful practical issue. He began by laying his hand of authority upon the high priesthood. Onias, who held the sacred office and who belonged to the patriotic Jewish party, had succeeded in counteracting the growing Hellenistic influence in the capital

[1] See Dan. VII. This chapter is typical of the book in its application to the historical period of the Maccabeans. The spiritual significance of the apocalyptic prophecy of the book is immediately apparent. The apocalyptic hope rose above the popular temporal and political dream. Its Messianism was carried over into the N. T. Revelation is the direct counterpart of Daniel. The apocalyptic element in the Gospels is sometimes at variance with its ethical note. Notice, e. g., the parables of the leaven (Mtt. XIII:33) and of the net (Mtt. XIII:47–50).

city. Antiochus forthwith deposed him and gave the office first to Jason and then to Menelaus, both of them Hellenists and men of unscrupulous moral character. Onias, thus deprived of his position, withdrew to Egypt where, since the founding of Alexandria, the Jews had been cordially received. Here, with the aid of devout and loyal kinsman, he built the famous Jewish temple at Leontopolis in the Delta of the Nile.[1] Beginning with this time Antiochus' program of repression developed into open and bitter persecution. He was prompted in part by humiliation and a thirst for vengeance. The campaign which he had planned against Egypt had ended in failure. By order of the Romans his army was forced to withdraw from the region of the Nile. An erroneous report came to Jerusalem that Antiochus had been killed. The leading patriots of the city led the people in a demonstration of exultant thanksgiving. Then Antiochus arrived. He was infuriated by what he had experienced and now saw. An instant order was given out by him for a wholesale massacre of the Jews. Next he plundered the temple. After that he ordered the destruction of the city wall and set up a garrison of Syrian soldiers to aid him in carrying to completion his revengeful and fanatical purpose. The shock to the Jewish community was terrible. The temple service was brought to an abrupt end; the sacred altar was broken into ruins, and in its place Epiphanes ordered the erection of an image of the Greek god Zeus, probably in the form of a likeness of himself. On the altar confronting this image swine's flesh was sacrificed in contempt for the Jews who were arbitrarily ordered to pay homage to the improvised cult. Those who offered resistance were persecuted, or punished with instant death. Many, perhaps the majority, yielded and performed the demanded sacrifice to the heathen god. Others, esteeming religious loyalty dearer than life, accepted martyrdom. Biblical history records no darker period in

[1] This temple, patterned after the temple in Jerusalem, became for centuries thereafter a place of frequent pilgrimage. It was completed about 170 B. C. It was, according to archæological discoveries, the second temple built to Jehovah in this land in which the Hebrew people frequently sought and found asylum. The first was that built at Elephantine, an island in the Nile, and referred to in an Aramaic document recently found and dated 408 B. C.

the life of the Hebrew people than the time of this severe crisis. The day spoken of by the author of the book of Daniel as "the abomination of desolation," occurred on the twenty-fifth of the month of Kislev, in the year 168 B. C.[1]

III. THE RISE OF THE MACCABEES

The stories of the martyrdom of Eleazar and of the heroic mother and her seven loyal sons, told by the author of Second Maccabees, are evidence that the Jews did not meet this crisis unworthily or unprepared. They proved that they could die for their faith without hesitancy or resort to violence. The hope, however, of winning a victory through unresisting martyrdom had not yet been fully established. The coming centuries of Christian faith were to be required for its realization. Such a victory was beyond the unaided reach of religious loyalty; it could be won only by a love whose nature prompted the gracious forgiveness of the persecuting enemy. Even the Jewish world was not yet prepared for the adoption of this later ideal of Christ. Patriotism, on the other hand, was a more readily interpretable and therefore more generally popular ideal. It was understood and respected also by the pagan world. It seemed, moreover, best suited to the religious as well as racial circumstances of the Jewish life of the time. Its chief conservator was the office of the priesthood. The leadership during the Maccabean crisis was in the hands of five stalwart and noble sons of the priestly family of Mattathias.

The uprising did not begin in Jerusalem but in the little town of Modin lying at the border of the foothills fifteen miles to the northwest. Mattathias was the faithful and greatly respected village priest. He himself struck the decisive blow that aroused the Judean cry for freedom. Stirred to indignation by the stated royal decree which demanded the worship of the Olympian god, and by the sight of the terrorized Jews who

[1] The date was December 25. This was the day the altar to Zeus was set up in the temple. The persecution lasted three years. The temple was rededicated on the same day of the month in 165 B. C.

participated in the sacrifice, he approached the pagan altar, slew both the prostrated worshiper and his attendant Syrian official, and, calling upon his five sons to accompany him, fled into the wilderness of southeastern Judea. There in the mountain fastnesses that descended toward the border of the Dead Sea, they organized a band of faithful followers. Most of them were from the party known as the Hasideans, whose successors of later fame were the Pharisees. The hardships of cave life proved too severe for the aged father. Before a year had passed he died. The leadership of the revolt then passed to Judas, his son. Judas, known in after years as the Maccabee, meaning "the Hammerer," became a singularly capable and energetic leader. He was a fiery patriot and knew his country. He was skilled in stratagem and understood how to strike decisive blow after blow, usually by surprise. The result soon told for Jewish freedom. He won victory after victory against the Syrian army. The final encounter was with Lysias himself, the regent general of the Seleucid empire. The battle took place in the hill country of Bethsur, on the road between Jerusalem and Hebron. Lysias was forced to withdraw to the distant capital of Antioch, leaving the Jewish army the victor and Judas the acclaimed hero.

Political independence for Judea lay as yet in the future. The patriotism which had won military freedom had still to establish the civilly governed free state. The struggle for religious liberty, however, ended successfully. The battle for faith had been well fought. The people now gave themselves to a restoration of the temple and to a reëstablishment of its sacred service. The rededication of the altar was celebrated, amid appropriate festivities, in December, 165 B. C. The Feast of Dedication, also called the Feast of Lights, became from that time forward an annual season for commemorating the birth of the new freedom.[1]

The fortunate outcome of the rebellion aroused the little

[1] The feast is referred to in John X:22 as coming in the winter. Candles were lighted as a part of a ceremony whose symbolism is strongly suggestive of our present-day celebration of Christmas. The date of the dedication, as has been stated, was December 25, 165 B. C.

Palestinian community to further patriotic hopes. These hopes ripened into the determination to sacrifice unto the utmost in order to regain the political liberty that had been lost four long centuries before through the fall of the Hebrew kingdom. The dream was visionary and fanciful; nevertheless it proved to be partly and temporarily capable of realization. The fires of Messianism were inextinguishable. The task now confronting Judas was to crush the oppressors of the Jews in the outlying districts of Palestine. He met with success in battles against the Edomites and the Ammonites, and against the foreigners of Gilead, of Galilee, and of Philistia. Lysias, who had come down from Antioch with a second and stronger army, returned satisfied with the terms of peace Judas had reluctantly accepted. The goal of freedom seemed more and more within reach. Then, almost suddenly, misfortune befell the Maccabean leader. Lysias was succeeded in the regentship by Demetrius. A certain Alcimus, a strong Hellenist, was appointed high priest and stationed at Jerusalem. Another and still stronger Syrian army appeared to press the cause against the Hasideans or puritan Jews. Fear overcame the majority of Judas' followers. He was met in battle and slain in 161 B. C. His death came as a shock to the cause of Jewish freedom. It gave courage to the Hellenizers who forthwith started a dreadful persecution.

Judas' brother Jonathan then assumed the leadership of the Jewish community. He exchanged his brother's sword for the weapon of diplomacy. The struggle for liberty was now shifted from the military to the political field. Judas had been a warrior; Jonathan became a statesman. The victories he won were, on the whole, less noble. Good fortune and diplomatic intrigue were the means whereby he was most aided in the realization of his purposes.[1] With almost no personal sacrifice, and without loss to his own people, he thus secured first the high priesthood for himself, then civil liberty for Jerusalem. His career, how-

[1] Jonathan's principal method was that of offering his political allegiance and personal influence to the highest bidder between the two rival claimants for the Syrian throne. These rivals were at first Demetrius I, son of Seleucus IV, and Alexander Balas; later Demetrius II and Trypho, a Syrian pretender who for a time served as prime minister to Alexander's young son Antiochus VI.

ever, not long afterwards, ended ingloriously at the hand of a Syrian assassin.[1]

Simon, who succeeded Jonathan to the high priesthood, was a man both of courage and of uncommon wisdom. Having carefully selected his ally from between the two rival contenders for the throne of Syria, he stood by his choice. For this act of deliberate confidence Demetrius II, who needed Simon's help, rewarded Judea with complete political independence. The event, which occurred in 143 B. C., signalized the beginning of a new era in Jewish history. The Jewish state was at last again established. The Syrian garrison, which had maintained a citadel at Jerusalem, was displaced by a carefully selected detachment of Jewish soldiery. The temple was completely restored, and Simon, himself its high priest, became the undisputed ruler of the Jewish people. Seasons of festive joy were followed by a period of peace and general religious awakening. Two passages of Biblical record reflect the thought and spirit of the faithful Jews of this time.[2] In one of them the author of First Maccabees describes the few but happy years of Simon's rule as a period when

> "Each man sat under his own vine and fig-tree,
> And no one made them afraid."

IV. THE DECLINE OF THE JEWISH STATE

The ardent expectations of the new era were frustrated by the untimely death of Simon.[3] This time however the murderer was not a Syrian but a member of Simon's own household. The tragedy marked a change in the history of the Maccabean period. It meant the departure of the heroic age. In its stead appeared an age characterized by a vulgar and disintegrating lust for power. The criminal selfishness of its monarchs soon laid low the little Jewish state and led it to its final ruin. The

[1] Jonathan was lured to his death by the treacherous Trypho who invited him to be his guest only to murder him.

[2] First Macc. XIV and Psalm. CX.

[3] Simon's rule extended from 142 to 135 B. C.

martyrdom of the saints was not in vain. Hope was kept alive and faith quickened. The challenge to courage and the call to self-sacrifice helped to contribute to the vigor and the perpetuity of the community's spiritual life. The Maccabean struggle did much to preserve the benefits of Israel's glorious past for the time of the great religious awakening which marked the dawn of the Christian era. Politically, however, the gain was slight. The taste of freedom served only to embitter the coming years of Jewish servitude to Rome. It awakened national ambitions through the futility of which the Hebrew people, a few centuries hence, were to lose not only their civil liberty but their racial home.[1]

Simon's death, like that of Solomon, was followed by civil war. When the storm of conflict had subsided and peace was again restored, Simon's third son, John Hyrcanus, stood at the helm of the state.[2] In courage and character Hyrcanus was the last to reflect credit upon the family name of his father. His rule was long and more than ordinarily successful. Politically he sought to serve the state by enlarging its geographical boundaries. He first subjugated the Samaritans and destroyed the rival temple which they had built on Mt. Gerizim. Then he subdued the Idumeans, who were the descendants of the ancient Edomites, the children of Esau. Religiously he abode, at first, by the principles of the developing Pharisaic party; later, however, he took the side of the Sadducees who were coming into social prominence at this time.[3] Aristobulus I, his son, who succeeded him, ruled only one year. Nevertheless he reigned longer than he deserved. During that single year he found occasion to im-

[1] The reference is here to the final destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D.

[2] Hyrcanus ruled from 135 to 104 B. C.

[3] The definite emergence of the Pharisaic and Sadducean parties is to be dated to this time. The Pharisees were the moral and religious puritans, devoted to the study and observance of the law. Their aspirations to freedom were solely religious. The Sadducees, on the other hand, were the practical liberalists. They identified themselves with the later Maccabean movement for political liberty. Theologically, however, they were more conservative than the Pharisees. They accepted only the law, rejecting the traditions, or precepts, which gathered around it—these precepts were about six hundred in number. The Pharisees were democratic and were the popular leaders; the Sadducees were the priestly aristocrats.

prison and starve his own mother, to imprison three of his brothers, and to cause the death of Antigonus, a fourth brother whom, though formerly his intimate friend, he had come to mistrust. Aristobulus was Hellenistic in all his tendencies. He adopted a Greek name and tried to imitate in barbarity the atrocious example of the Syrian, Antiochus Epiphanes.

He was succeeded by his even more degenerate brother, Alexander Jannæus, whom subsequent history justly surnamed "The Brute". His reign lasted twenty-seven years. It began with a period of riot and anarchy.[1] The people, encouraged by their moral leaders, the Pharisees, resented the licentious brutality of Jannæus. This resentment found expression on one occasion when they pelted him with soft over-ripe citrons while, in assumption of the prerogative of a high priest, he was engaged in a festive sacrifice in the temple. Upon another occasion, following a period of slaughter which had cost the lives of fifty thousand Jews, he had the temerity publicly to ask the people why they so hated him and what he might do to conciliate them. Their answer, though impulsive, was justified. They said: "Die!" [2] The reign of terror which followed ended successfully for Jannæus. It was the success of brute force.

At his death the kingdom was bequeathed to Alexandra, his widow. Together with Hyrcanus her eldest son, who was given the high priesthood, she joined the party of the Pharisees. Aristobulus, the younger son and brother, however, remained with the Sadducees. The result was a period of continued family strife in the ruling house of the Hasmoneans.[3] During the nine remaining years of Alexandra's life the Pharisees were indisputably in power. These years have been called the golden age of Pharisaism.[4] The queen mother's death, however, signaled the call to arms. Aristobulus was rapidly gaining the upper hand when a succession of events occurred which, in a few years, completely changed the course of the history of Palestine and

[1] Jannæus' reign extended from 104 to 78 B.C.

[2] See Josephus, Antiq. XIII, and Jewish War I.

[3] Mattathias, the father of Judas, Jonathan, and Simon, was the country priest and head of the house of Hashmon. Hence the term Hasmoneans.

[4] See Peritz, O. T. History, p. 312. The period extended from 78 to 69 B.C.

for all time brought to an end the independent existence of the Hebrew state. Most important among these events were the rise of the Idumean Antipater, the father of Herod, and the advent of Rome through the successful generalship of Pompey. Antipater first found his way into the court of Alexandra. Then he solicited and won the aid of the Arabian king Aretas in defense of the cause of Alexandra's son Hyrcanus. Thus fortified he faced Aristobulus. The civil strife ended with the arrival of Pompey. In 70 B. C. the Roman general had carried on his successful campaigns in northwestern Asia. In 65 B. C. he sent Scaurus, one of his military officers, into Syria. With his headquarters at Damascus, Scaurus awaited further developments. The opportune time came when both Hyrcanus and Aristobulus brought their case before him for interview and judgment. The Roman decided in favor of Aristobulus, and ordered the immediate withdrawal of Aretas, the ally of Hyrcanus. This decision did not settle the question. Accordingly when, two years later, Pompey himself arrived at Damascus, the rival brothers again appealed their case. At this time, however, a third party or constituency was represented. A delegation of Pharisees presented itself expressing the voice of the people. The Hasmonean rule had been a failure. The Jewish state was politically dead. Its population declared itself weary of being exploited. It wanted above all its former religious freedom and a community life of peace. For political protection it willingly and gratefully looked to the increasing dominion of Rome. Accordingly the request was made that the Jewish monarchy be displaced by a Roman colonial government. It was only desired that the social life of the Jews be left undisturbed and that it be allowed to be regulated by the ecclesiastical laws already firmly established by the priestly constitution.

The request was granted, but the new order did not go into effect without the loss of Jewish lives and property. Aristobulus, who opposed the plan, had first to be subdued and taken prisoner. After that Pompey found it necessary to lay siege to the barricaded temple. When, in 61 B. C., Judea again became a settled community, Hyrcanus II was stationed in Jerusalem as

its high priest and constitutional head, its territory was reduced and made subject to the levy of a tribute, Aristobulus was taken prisoner and sent to Rome, and the Maccabean kingdom, after a hundred years of history, came to an abrupt end.

The collapse of the Jewish state was the result of its moral and spiritual decay. The age lacked worthy political and religious leadership. Its earlier heroism gave way to later fratricidal feuds; its spiritual ideals were trampled under foot by men of lust and greed. But for the loyalty of the faithful few who upheld them, they might have been allowed to perish in a mire of blood. This noble minority, largely unknown by name, was Israel's spiritual saviour. The Messianic dream which it cherished depended for its sustenance upon the lives and homes of saintly and spiritually gifted individuals. Though prophecy had practically disappeared, the apocalyptic hope, sustained by prophetic predictions and an undying national consciousness, survived. More and more it turned Israel's attention heavenward and toward the distant future. Popular religion, on its practical side, became increasingly legalistic. It became a punctiliously observed cult of obedience. On its mystical side it tended rapidly toward a cosmic supernaturalism. The Persian and Greek philosophical influences succeeded in making themselves appreciably felt. The Pharisees, strict puritans though they were, adopted the angelology and demonology which had entered Hebrew thought through contact with the East. The doctrines of the resurrection and a future universal judgment were definitely accepted.[1] The prophetic urge to moral reform was noticeably absent. Piety was gradually reduced to the simple formula of watching and praying. The priest devoted himself to the sacrificial ritual; the scribe became the faithful interpreter of the law; the synagogue, now well established, nurtured the popular Messianic hope. Lastly the sage, the practical religious philosopher, continued his fruitful inquiry into truth and life in order to discover their hidden and ultimate meaning. The Biblical literature of the Maccabean and the Roman periods is, in a

[1] The Sadducees, it has been noted, opposed these doctrines. They were theologically the more conservative of the two parties

special sense, a monument to the last of these four types of religious activity. The sages were the leaders of religious thought; they were the rationalists of Judaism. Their writings were purported to have a profound and esoteric meaning. Only the initiated, it was believed, could understand them. They, accordingly, were known as the Apocrypha, or hidden books.[1] The foremost of them are the books of Judith, Tobit, the Wisdom of Solomon, the Song of the Three Holy Children, First Esdras, Enoch, the Book of Jubilees, and the Psalms of Solomon.[2] A brief statement concerning each will throw interesting light upon their contents.

1. The book of Judith resembles, in many particulars, the book of Esther. It is a story of heroism and fidelity to the Jewish ideals of the time. Judith is the heroine who serves her country in a time of crisis. The circumstances out of which the story rises are those of the Maccabean revolt.

2. Tobit, written shortly after Judith, extols the virtues of Pharisaism. Its chief characteristic is its spirit of piety and of reverence for the law. Its writer has an exalted opinion of the superiority and religious mission of the Hebrew people. He reveals the rapidly developing fault of the Pharisaic party, namely, its ecclesiastical bigotry and pride.

3. The Wisdom of Solomon stands in wholesome contrast to the prevailing narrowness of Jewish patriotism during this period. It represents the broad and cultural attitude of the Jew who is in close and sympathetic contact with the influences of Hellenism. The writer lived in Egypt where this influence was widespread and welcomed. He appears to have been familiar with the book of Ecclesiastes, with the problems of which he deals in a much more satisfying manner. The whole of life is

[1] The word Apocrypha means "hidden." The books of this collection may themselves have been kept in secret places in order to keep the uninitiated from falling into religious heresies. For a complete list of both the O. T. and N. T. Apocrypha see Hastings' Dict. of the Bible, Vol. I, p. 110.

[2] First and Second Maccabees were also listed among the Apocrypha; likewise the book of Ecclesiasticus. Not all of the Apocryphal writings were included in the Septuagint translation, and, accordingly, did not find their way into the English editions of the Apocrypha. These writings are generally known by the name Pseudepigrapha.

viewed by him in the light of a clear conception of its worth and its immortality. The book is excellently written, and, in all probability, served as a readily available source-book of religious information during New Testament times.

4. The Song of the Three Holy Children is known also as the Prayer of Azarias. It is a poem of sixty-eight verses divided into three sections: (1) the prayer of Azarias; (2) the story of the heated furnace and the descent of the angels; (3) the song of thanksgiving for the miraculous deliverance of the three martyrs. The Song bears a close resemblance to the early chapters of the book of Daniel. It reflects the noble faith of the heroes of the Maccabean crisis.

5. First Esdras is a historical book of outstanding worth. It is a Greek recension of the canonical books of Ezra and Nehemiah, in addition to which it presents the reader with facts of authenticity which aid in the reconstruction of the Biblical history of the Persian period. It was probably written about 100 B. C.

6. The book of Enoch is an apocalypse of the Maccabean period. Its influence upon the subsequent history of Jewish thought is very marked. The visions of the writer, as those in Daniel, center upon a glorious divine personage who, in Daniel, is called the Son of Man, but who is here clearly recognized as the Messiah. Its development of the doctrines of angels, of the resurrection, and of a future world judgment gave it the distinction of being the theological handbook of Pharisaic Judaism. Its author's aim was to console his people in a time of persecution. However, in the task before him, he looked deeper than those of his time who saw in the vicissitudes of the Jews the chastening purpose of God. He interpreted them as proof that Israel's period of redemption was at hand. The Messiah, he taught, was even then at hand, preëxistent with God, and awaiting the divine command to come to earth in the form of man to become mankind's redeemer.[1]

[1] How the Hebrew world was prepared, by the teachings of this book, for the coming Gospel of Jesus is altogether apparent. Its influence upon early Christianity, during both the first and second centuries, is easily traceable.

7. The Book of Jubilees is another product of Pharisaism. It is a theological history written for the purpose of bringing the lives of the early Hebrew patriarchs into conformity with the later Jewish law. The freedom with which its author deals with the historical material of the book of Genesis appears somewhat in contrast to his own Pharisaic demand for a literalistic interpretation of the law. It is evident, however, that he is in this respect only following the set example of the priestly historian and the Jewish chronicler of earlier times. The book derives its name from the system of Jubilee periods into which the history is divided.[1]

8. The Psalms of Solomon are eighteen in number. They are the beautiful expressions of the Jewish people's faith in God, in the coming of the Messiah, and the resurrection and immortality of the just. They reflect the religious genius of the noblest spiritual predecessors of Jesus.[2]

[1] The Jubilee year was that following the expiration of the seventh Sabbatical year, i. e., the fiftieth year. The writer divides Biblical history, up to the time of Moses, into fifty jubilee periods. See H. P. Smith's O. T. History, p. 488.

[2] The list of the apocrypha here presented is incomplete. It suffices, however, to set forth the main religious and theological tendencies of the century immediately preceding the beginning of the Christian era.

CHAPTER XVII

PALESTINE UNDER ROMAN RULE

BIBLICAL history is proof that the Hebrew people did not at any time succeed in living a secluded national or community life. Palestine was situated at the cross-roads of the ancient empires of the world. The nations historically contemporary with Israel were many. More than a thousand years of parallel chronology are summed up in such names as the following: Moses and Merneptah; Isaiah and Hesiod; Jeremiah and Zoroaster; Second Isaiah and Cyrus; Herodotus and Nehemiah; Epiphanes and Judas Maccabeus; Pompey and Hyrcanus; Herod and Antony; Jesus and Augustus; Paul and Nero.

Of all of Israel's political masters none was more effectively authoritative and, therefore, more intensely hated than imperial Rome. Rome laid its iron hand upon Palestine at a time of importance in its own great history. The Roman republic, which throughout a period of more than four centuries had maintained the mastery of the Mediterranean, was facing a definite crisis. It was, in fact, on the verge of its final collapse. It was being crushed between the two millstones of foreign aggression and civil war. Eastern monarchs, particularly Mithridates, king of Pontus, a region on the southern shores of the Black Sea, were pressing Rome to war. The oppressed slave population led by Spartacus, a gladiator from Thessaly, had risen against the nation's aristocratic leaders.[1] Political adventurers intrigued against the Senate and fought for dictatorial power. Military legions, made up almost entirely of professional soldiers, terrorized the people at home and abroad. The first Roman triumvirate, composed of Cæsar, Crassus, and Pompey, was a sign that the republic had at last fallen into autocratic hands. After that there were civil wars which, in a very short time, dealt a death-

[1] c. 75 B. C.

blow to the already prostrate republic. Crassus met his fate in a campaign against the Parthians in the region beyond the Euphrates. Pompey, following his successes in Armenia, in Syria, and in Palestine, was overcome by Cæsar, his rival for the mastery of the West. For five years [1] Cæsar was the uncrowned monarch of the Roman world. After his assassination Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus, the members of the second triumvirate, deliberately planned the destruction of the republic. Cicero, its noblest friend and patriot, was the first to fall. A little later Lepidus was expelled from the triumvirate. Then, with Antony in control of the East and Octavius ruler in the West, came the final struggle. After the battle of Actium [2] Octavius was the sole dictator of Rome. The republic perished, and from its ashes rose the empire. By a vote of the now enfeebled senate Caius Octavius became Augustus Cæsar. He refused the hated title of king; instead, however, he chose that of emperor. When he died, in 14 A. D., the still further enfeebled senate unanimously voted his deification. Thereafter he became a god, the symbol of imperial Rome. Little wonder that, despite the justice which uniformly tempered the severity of Roman government, the empire was regarded with contempt as well as fear by the patriotic and saintly Jews of Palestine. Cæsar worship was regarded by them as a supreme religious outrage; and the Gentile world, which as time passed yielded to its adoption, was regarded by the pious and spiritually cultured adherents to Judaism as steeped in ignominious ignorance.

I. THE RISE OF THE HERODS

The Roman empire did not merely lie at the background of the events of later Biblical history. It definitely determined their outward course. The earliest political connecting link between the Cæsars and the Palestinian Jewish colony was the royal family of the Herods. In them were represented the outstanding weaknesses of both the Jewish and the Gentile races. They

[1] From 49 to 44 B. C.
[2] In 31 B. C.

themselves were of mixed blood. Semitic passion and barbarian cruelty developed in them side by side. Antipater, the father of Herod the Great, was an Idumean. He was, above all, clever and ambitious. Herod himself, throughout his life time, acted like an unscrupulous, yet morally tortured pagan. His sons, imitating him, became a scourge to the Jewish people.[1] Yet, as the rise of the party of the Herodians clearly indicates, they were not altogether unpopular. They apparently outwitted, and even occasionally pleased, their despised subjects.

The rise of the Herods was phenomenal. It began with Antipater, whose services Cæsar did not permit long to go unrewarded. Pompey had been the first on the scene in Palestine, at which time he had put an end to the independent Jewish state.[2] Crassus, too, on his way toward the campaign against the Parthians, had stopped there long enough to enter Jerusalem and to plunder the temple. Cæsar, fresh from his conquest of Gaul and determined to make himself the master of the Roman world, followed their example. He first pursued Pompey on the latter's flight to Egypt. Then he established his sovereignty over Syria and the entire Jewish territory. After that he made Antipater procurator of Judea. Hyrcanus, with whom Antipater had allied himself in the days of the Hasmonean decline and who still remained high priest, was given political honor by being made ethnarch of the territory.

After Cæsar's death, Cassius, one of the republican conspirators, fled into Syria where he sought to raise an army against Antony, who sought to succeed Cæsar in his mastery over Rome. By this time Antipater had given the power of his office to his two sons Phasael and Herod. Phasael became governor of the territory surrounding Jerusalem; Herod was given the rulership of Galilee. Cassius, himself a diplomatist, found Herod a helpful ally. Later Antony, on his expedition eastward to claim possession of his allotted territory, summoned Herod before him to account for the aid he had rendered to the repub-

[1] Philip, tetrarch of the Trachonitis, was a worthy exception. He was a good and kindly ruler, and deservedly popular.

[2] This was in 65 B. C.

lican conspirators. Herod was equal to the occasion, and the interview ended in his favor. Together with Phasael he was appointed tetrarch of the territory of Judea.

A temporary reversal of fortune overtook Herod with the conquest of Syria by the Parthians.[1] Under their protection a last attempt was made to reëstablish the independence of the Jewish state. Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus and therefore a descendant of the surviving house of the Hasmoneans, interpreted this attempt as his opportunity. Accompanied by his followers, he entered Jerusalem. Herod fled and, after many adventures, found safety in Rome. Hyrcanus was seized and mutilated to disqualify him for further services in the office of the high priesthood. Phasael and Antipater, his father, were taken prisoners by the Parthians. The rule of Antigonus lasted but three years. With his imprisonment and death Jewish independence and the Maccabean dynasty passed into history. Herod's flight to Rome terminated greatly to his advantage. It furthered his political opportunities and led to an increase of power. Upon the recommendation of Antony and Octavius the Roman senate appointed him king of Judea.

The reign of Herod introduced a new and significant period in Biblical history. It marked the boundary line between two epochs in the progress of religious revelation. It began with the death of the last of the Maccabeans; and ended with the dawn of the Christian era.[2] Its earliest manifest characteristic was Herod's determined diplomacy. He sought to win favor without a sacrifice of his authority. He was more than ordinarily successful in the attempt both in Palestine and in Rome. He won the friendship of Antony, despite the seductive interference of Cleopatra who fancied herself chosen to be queen not only in Alexandria but in Jerusalem. After Antony's death Herod was equally successful in winning the support and personal friendship of Octavius, who increased his sovereignty until it included

[1] The Parthians entered Syria and captured Jerusalem in 40 B. C. They were probably the descendants of the ancient Scythians who, in the time of Jeremiah (c. 626 B. C.), came across the Caucasus and, spreading both eastward and westward, threatened the inundation of Asia.

[2] Herod's reign dates from 40 to 4 B. C.

almost the whole of Palestine. His considerate treatment of the Jews, particularly the leading Pharisees, rendered them tolerant toward his rule. By means of his broadminded diplomacy he was able to maintain peace. He forbade, and himself avoided, religious persecution.

Herod's greatest achievement in the interest of the Jews was his successful building program. Among the cities which he either founded or beautified were Cæsarea, Samaria, Antipatris, and Phasælis.[1] Jerusalem was all but transformed by his architectural genius, joined with a somewhat capricious taste for royal magnificence. The temple became his most worthy and lasting monument. It served as the symbol both of the religious aspirations of the Jewish people, and of Herod's own artistic tastes and Hellenistic tendencies.[2]

Despite Herod's modified claim to greatness, he was an evil and justly hated man. The Jews feared and occasionally despised him for three very good reasons: first, because he ruled absolutely as he wished; second, because he was an ardent and zealous disciple of Hellenistic culture; third, because he lacked moral character. His pagan tendencies and enthusiasm for Greek culture were clearly evident in the presence of the theater, the amphitheater, and the hippodrome, which he built in 25 B. C., in the very heart of the city of Jerusalem in honor of Augustus.[3] The ornate architecture of the temple itself must have reminded a Jewish traveler from the regions of the dispersion more of a Greek acropolis than of the ancestral sacred hill of Zion. The whole spectacle was too suggestive of the scenes enacted in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes to be regarded with tolerance by those familiar with Jewish history. The resentment against Herod was deepened by the further thought that

[1] Samaria, when rebuilt, was given the name Sebaste. Cæsarea was built in honor of Octavius, who was emperor at Rome from 31 B. C. to 14 A. D. Antipatris was built in honor of Herod's father; Phasælis in memory of his brother.

[2] The work of construction on the temple was begun in 20 B. C. The building was not actually completed until 63 A. D., seven years before it was again destroyed.

[3] A further sign of Herod's determination to Hellenize Palestine was his invitation to Greek writers and scholars to come to Jerusalem and to continue their labors under his royal patronage.

the burden of taxation for the realization of his Hellenistic ambitions was laid upon them. The old patriotic instinct in them rebelled against an enslavement designed to do them evil.

Though liberally pagan in culture, in his personal life and manners he acted the part of a typically degraded Oriental monarch. His whims were those of a despot, of a man having power without character. He was an abject slave of his own passions. His criminal record is absolutely repulsive. Murder seems to have been his specialty. The victims were often those of his own household. The very list of their names is pathetic. These are some of them: Aristobulus, his wife's brother; Hyrcanus, the venerable high priest and life-long supporter of Antipater; Mariamne, his wife, to whom, despite his evil nature, he was deeply devoted; and Alexandra, Mariamne's mother. His punishment came at last when a loathsome disease fastened itself upon him. He died a terrible death in 4 B. C., with the blot of the murder of the Innocents upon his name.[1] Had his vicious designs not miscarried, the child Jesus, too, would have been numbered among them.[2]

II. JUDAISM AT THE CLOSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ERA

Our Old Testament study may be brought to a convenient close with a few outlined statements concerning the religious life of the Jewish people at this time. The important facts present themselves under two topics: (1) the religious institutions, and (2) the religious conceptions of the period.

Foremost among the institutions was the temple with its order of worship, its system of sacrifices, and its sacred priesthood. The sanctuary of Israel's primitive days had been the plain altar of

[1] Mtt. II:16.

[2] Among the sons of Herod six later distinguished themselves: Aristobulus, from whom descended Agrippa I (Acts XII) and Agrippa II (Acts XXVI); Alexander, whose descendants were kings of Armenia; Herod Philip, the first husband of Herodias, and the father of Salome; Archelaus, for ten years (4 B. C. to 6 A. D.) king of Judea; Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (d. 39 A. D.); and Philip, tetrarch of Itrurea or the Trachonitis (d. 34 A. D.).

stone. Usually it had been erected at a place of natural elevation in the desert or upon a mountain in Palestine. The earliest sacrifices had been offerings of grain or fruit shared with Jehovah as meals of communion or gifts of thanksgiving. Then in the course of time the burnt offering appeared. Fire became the symbol both of moral purification and of the searching judgment of God. With the development of ethical conceptions among the Hebrew people there appeared a growing sense of guilt and of the need for forgiveness. These experiences found expression in Israel's moral covenant with Jehovah which culminated in the great decalogue of Moses. With the conquest of Canaan and the establishment of the Hebrew nation, the tabernacle, which was at one time simply the protecting enclosure of the sacred altar, gave way to the temple. Religion became the natural embodiment of patriotism. Sacrifice developed into a national institution. The priest, hitherto a subordinate character, gradually took his place by the side of the prophet and the king. Soothsaying and the casting of the sacred lot, which were the early functions of the priestly office, were subordinated to the ritual of religious worship expressed particularly in the memorable peace and burnt offerings.

The fall of the Northern Kingdom, in 722 B. C., and more especially the religious reformation of Josiah which followed a century later,[1] marked the beginning of a change in the history of Hebrew worship. Jerusalem became the religious center of Palestine, and, spiritually, the object of the sincere longing and devotion to countless individuals among the Hebrews of the dispersion. With the fall of Jerusalem, in 586 B. C., prophecy, which through its individual and ethical emphasis had helped Israel's religion to survive the shock of the disappearance of the nation, began gradually to be superseded by the sacrificial ritual and the ceremonial law. The rebuilding of the temple was a further step in the direction of this change. So also was the increased restriction placed upon the candidacy for the office of the priesthood. The rite of circumcision and

[1] It began in 621 following the discovery of Deuteronomy, the book of the law.

the gift of the tithe, it may be added, served the same legalistic purpose.[1]

The second institution of importance in the religious life of the closing Old Testament period was the synagogue. Its character was thoroughly democratic. It was dedicated to popular worship and the teaching of the Jewish law. Its origin is probably to be traced to the period of the exile. With its growth the scribe came into prominence and was given a place of popular esteem by the side of the priest. The law became the acknowledged instrument of divine revelation; the sacrifice was accepted as the providentially appointed agent of reconciliation and spiritual communion. The later stages of their development were simultaneous, and together they represented the basic constituents of Judaism.

Intimately associated with the temple and the synagogue was the institution of the Sabbath. Bible history associates its earliest beginning with the life and time of Moses. Its special sacredness was, however, only gradually acknowledged. Several centuries passed before its universal adoption by the Hebrew people. In the original version of the Decalogue the commandment to keep the Sabbath implies that it is to be regarded as a form of spiritual offering to Jehovah. The day is holy and belongs to Him. The motive enjoined upon the worshiper is clearly sacrificial. In the later Deuteronomic code, on the other hand, it is ethical and humanitarian. The emphasis is upon man's need of rest and upon Jehovah's compassion for those that toil. In its final version, which is of priestly origin, the commandment assumes a supramundane significance through its association, in the language of the writer, with the divine order of the creation.[2] The Sabbath becomes the symbol of the presence of a natural law in the spiritual world and, inversely, of a divine purpose in the order of nature. It appears as the outstanding sign of the holiness of life amid a people's varied secular pursuits.

[1] The priest at first had been selected without restriction of family origin; later he was chosen only from the tribe of Levi; finally only the sons of Aaron were considered to be ceremonially qualified.

[2] The three versions are found in Exod. XXXIV, Exod. XX, and Deut. V.

Thus, in the course of time, it develops into the central institution in the religious life of the Jewish people. Home and community interests come under its direct and beneficial influence. It serves as a constant reminder that Israel's heritage and mission are spiritual. It is holy. Presently, however, its sacredness lifts it above man's common life and it becomes an object of his worship. Traditions gather around it, each requiring its own detailed interpretation. Special homage is due it for its own sake. It becomes an end in itself. The humanitarian and moral purpose which it once served is lost; piety becomes legalistic Sabbath-worship; the spirit, which was once the life of the law, is made the victim of the letter which destroys. The Sabbath no longer exists for man but man for the Sabbath.

The religious ideas of Judaism were determined in part by Israel's national career. Religion among the Hebrews was at first predominantly social. It remained to the end closely associated with community and political aspirations. However, side by side with the social, there developed the individual emphasis. It was the historical result of the disappearance of the Hebrew nation. Contact with contemporary races and nations further helped to individualize and to universalize Israel's spiritual conceptions. The emphasis upon morality was a characteristic of the social element in the messages of the prophets. The trend toward the theological, which clearly manifested itself with the beginning of the exile, was the mark of developing religious individualism.

The chief contributing factor toward the growth of religious conceptions among the Hebrews was its long list of great personalities. The most notable among them were the prophets. Through them Israel became conscious of the individual existence, the personal nearness, and the transcendent moral character of God. They awakened their compatriots to a realization of Israel's sacred mission; they interpreted its history as a unique and gracious manifestation of divine providence; under the guidance of their vision and the inspiration of their idealism its literature became sacred scripture, its political aspirations were transformed into the noble dream of a Messianic kingdom, and

its soil became the fertile seed-bed both for the growth of Judaism and for the planting of the later and greater truths of the Christian gospel.

The principal teachings of Judaism during late Old Testament times are capable of being summarized in three statements centering (1) upon God, (2) upon man, and (3) upon the order and destiny of the world.

The Jewish conception of God was the essence of pure monotheism. Jehovah, once a tribal deity and later the God of the Hebrew nation, had ascended to world sovereignty and was now regarded as the God of individual men and of all mankind. Nevertheless there was a unique sense in which He was believed to be the God of the Jewish people. The Hebrews had, in historical times, been both a God-choosing and a God-chosen people. Israel's mission, long since begun, was not yet complete. God's plan of world redemption involved His further and special providential care for the Jewish race.

Closely associated with the Jewish conception of the oneness and universality of God was the thought of His transcendence. He was Lord of the earth but His dwelling place was in the heavens. He had not always dwelt thus far away. He had once been intimately near in the symbolism of the primitive Hebrew sacrifices. Then came the downfall of the Hebrew nation, which was interpreted as the sign of Jehovah's displeasure. Judah's sense of guilt resulted in the belief that God had withdrawn from His people. The world was still under His government, but only indirectly; angels had come to be the intermediaries between heaven and earth.[1] In His transcendence God ruled the world by the power of His word which was the expression of His will. The written record of His will was the law. Obedience to His will was the only way to God. Hence the law became more and more regarded as the primary agent of divine revelation and human redemption.[2] The scribes and Pharisees became its

[1] In the place of angels it was frequently—especially in the thought of the sages—the divine spirit of wisdom, exalted above man and emanating from God, who was, at this time, regarded as the creator of life and the guide in the daily affairs of men.

[2] Greek ideas and their influence upon Hebrew thought are here clearly apparent.

chief sponsors. Their strong opposition to Jesus' later teachings concerning the immanence and fatherhood of God and to His substitution of brotherly love for the letter of the law is accordingly interpretable upon the basis of traditional Jewish theology.

Judaism fully accepted the late prophetic emphasis upon the individual. The desire for righteousness and for personal fellowship with God was further intensified. The idea of a personal Messiah placed a greatly needed stress upon human individuality. The synagogue, with its democratic tendencies, exalted the moral claims and the spiritual possibilities of the common man. The sense of guilt and sin, shifted from the Hebrew nation or the Jewish community to the human individual, aided in establishing a new conception of salvation. It developed personal obligations and loyalties; it cultivated the human conscience; it broadened the individual outlook. Man began definitely to have a place in the world order. He had an individual destiny. Justice demanded a reward for personal righteousness. Hope found expression in the doctrine of the future life. Aspirations toward a fully realized life voiced themselves in a belief in a democratic society called the kingdom of God.

Jewish monotheism and individualism subjected the world and the whole of life to a most scrutinizing investigation. The future, to be sure, was in God's hands. It was to the common man a hidden mystery. To the eye of the apocalyptist, however, it lay revealed as an open book. It was given to him to see the outcome and end of things. The alert mind of Judaism turned naturally and intently to questions of eschatology.[1] There was a wonder in God's plan concerning the destiny of the world which deeply stirred the heart and stimulated the prophetic imagination. When combined with the hope which Messianism had long since aroused among the Jewish people, these eschatological dreams assumed a definite and peculiar aspect. The hope

Both the idealism of Plato, with its separation of the real from the ideal world, and Stoicism, with its marked stress upon the sovereignty of God, are here represented.

[1] Eschatology concerns itself with doctrines of the last things. Its questions are those having to do with the end of the world.

became apocalyptic.[1] The doctrine of the last things and Messianism became all but identical in the thought of those apocalyptically inclined. The coming of the Messiah was regarded as the end of the old world order or dispensation.[2] Through Him all things were to be made new. His advent became the object of universal and eager expectation among the devout of Judaism. More and more, national ambition gave place to spiritual longing. While Israel was waiting, the world was being prepared for the Messiah's arrival. Suddenly, in Judea beyond the Jordan, there was heard the voice of a wilderness prophet. It was the voice of John the Baptist. The days of feverish expectancy were ended. The kingdom was at hand. Jesus, who was to be called the Christ, had appeared.

[1] For reference to apocalyptic literature see index.

[2] See here especially the apocryphal book of Enoch which is now known to have originated in the second and first centuries B. C., and to have greatly influenced N. T. thought. The influence is most marked in the Gospels and the book of Revelation.

PART V

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NEW TESTAMENT AGE

THE original home of the world's great living religions was Asia. Two of these, the most widespread and renowned of them, had their birthplace in Palestine. Palestine is holy land to both Jews and Christians throughout the world. It has made more history than any other territory of similar size on earth. On its soil the ancient Hebrews laid the foundation, and built the structure of a great monotheism. From within its border Christianity came with its gospel of an eternal hope and a universally redeemed humanity.

I. PALESTINE AND THE NEW ERA

The opening of the Christian era found Palestine in three respects a changed country. It was, first of all, no longer an isolated land. It had ceased to be a Hebrew state or, in a distinct sense, a Jewish community. It had become a Roman province. Rome was not content to subjugate. Its aim was to civilize. Except for its ancient caravan routes, the interior of Palestine had at one time been a comparatively secluded region. This was especially true of the territory surrounding the Judean hills. Though frequently over-run, in the course of the preceding centuries—and, in the course of time, brought under the yoke of the successive conquering empires of Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia—Palestine had been, until recent times, an oft-subdued and exploited but scarcely ever a properly governed land. Persia had indeed made the attempt, but the magnitude of its empire and the remoteness of its seat of authority had operated against the plan. The conquest of Alexander brought a change. The Greek nation was the first foreign power to undertake an

actual recivilization of the Palestinian population. Its conquerors were missionaries of culture, whose conquest was by the power of ideas rather than by force of arms. The response of the Jews was what might have been expected. The foreigner, for the first time in Hebrew history, was welcomed with a widespread feeling of relief. Hatred toward the Gentile temporarily gave way to friendliness. For a time it was believed that Judah's millennium had dawned. Then came the crisis. The Maccabean revolt which followed was itself proof of the marked success of the Hellenistic movement. After that the Jews never again lived alone. Since they had refused to go out into the world, the world had pressed in upon them. As a consequence thousands of them became cosmopolitans, Jews of the dispersion, more properly called Hellenists or Greek-speaking Jews. Thereafter Jew and Gentile mingled freely throughout the Roman empire. They met on the highways, in the markets, and in the Hebrew synagogues. The old race prejudices still remained, but the Christian gospel, about to enter upon its mission of spiritual conquest, was soon to subordinate them to the nobler ideals of world citizenship and universal human brotherhood. The racial borders were slowly breaking down; the Jew was given a world outlook. With this event came the dawn of a new age.

The second marked change in the condition of Palestine at the dawn of the New Testament era was attributable directly to circumstances within the empire. The Roman world was in a state of comparative peace. The republic had given way to the monarchy, and the sovereignty of Octavius, now hailed as Cæsar Augustus, was undisputed. The peoples of western Europe, as far north as Britain, those of the northern coastlands of Africa and of the region of the Nile, and the inhabitants of Asia, at least as far east as the Euphrates, heard and answered to the tread of the Roman legions and felt the protective influence of Roman law. Roman government had developed into a masterly system for the administration of justice. Roman roads encouraged travel and the spread of ideas. They contributed to the consolidation of the empire. They became the highways first of Roman civilization, then of the Christian Gospel. Of the

five which led from the city of Rome, two extended eastward, one through Antioch, the other through Sidon and Cæsarea to Jerusalem. Most of the cities through which they passed were centers of Greek culture. Greek thought and the Greek language were dominant in Syria and even in the upper districts of Palestine. In Judea the Aramaic dialect of the classical Hebrew had become the adopted vernacular. Latin was regarded only as the official language of the Roman court. Outside of Judea almost everyone spoke Greek. It had become, and remained during the early centuries of the Christian era, the language of the Mediterranean world. By the end of the first century A. D. it had displaced the Hebrew as the language of sacred scripture. It became the language of the Gospels and of the writings of Paul. The apostles' choice of it as the bearer of the message of Christianity marked its last and greatest literary triumph.

Finally, the beginning of the New Testament era witnessed a notable change in the political geography of Palestine. Herod's death, which followed soon after the birth of Jesus, resulted in the division of his little kingdom. It was divided among his sons, and into three principal territories. The first, the province of Judea, was bequeathed to Archelaus; the second, composed of the two provinces of Galilee and Perea, fell to Herod Antipas; the third, lying to the north and east of the Lake of Galilee, and known as Iturea and the Trachonitis, was given to Herod Philip.

II. ROMAN AND PALESTINIAN RULERS

Archelaus, who held the title of ethnarch, or king, ruled Judea ten years.[1] Included in his kingdom were the neighboring territories of Samaria and Idumea. Samaria was not, racially speaking, a recognized part of Judea. No Jewish patriot would set foot on Samaritan soil. Idumea, lying to the south, was held to Judea by strong ancestral ties. It had been the original home of the Edomites, the descendants of Esau; and Antipater, the

[1] From 4 B. C. to 6 A. D.

father of Herod I, had been an Idumean.[1] The government of Judea was by areas or toparchies. There were eleven of them, with Jerusalem as their common center. Each toparchy had its own local sanhedrin or council. The Jerusalem sanhedrin, however, was the final Jewish court of appeal. Its authority was civil as well as religious. The Roman capital of the province was at Cæsarea on the Mediterranean coast. It occupied a political position midway between those of Jerusalem and Rome. In the absence of public disturbances the Jews were allowed a full measure of self-government. In times of crises, however, the interference of Rome was authoritative and direct.

Archelaus was removed from office and banished by an order of Augustus in 6 A. D. The indictments against him were for incompetence and cruelty. Following his deposition Judea became a subordinate province governed by a local officer called a procurator. His office was of an equestrian rank in the Roman army. He was, in addition, given the necessary administrative and judicial powers to make him a civil ruler. The official residence of the procurator was at Cæsarea. Upon festive occasions, however, when Jerusalem was most likely to become the scene of political disturbances, he took up headquarters in the city Prætorium, which had formerly been the palace of Herod and was situated on the western hill overlooking the temple.

Herod Antipas ruled Galilee and Perea as tetrarch, or petty king, subject to the overlordship of Rome. The two territories, though separated by the Jordan and by a portion of the adjacent region known as the Decapolis, had many characteristics in common.[2] Every Jew, however loyal to Jerusalem, felt at home in both Perea and Galilee. Gospel history links them together and associates them inseparably with the life of Jesus.

[1] The Judean province, in N. T. times, extended from northern Samaria to the desert, and from the Jordan to the maritime plain. The cities of Jammia and Joppa, though Jewish, were not included.

[2] The Decapolis was not, strictly speaking, a region of contiguous territory; it was a confederation of Greek city-states which sought to maintain their own political and cultural independence amid Oriental surroundings. Of the ten cities Scythopolis alone lay west of the Jordan. The remaining nine were Pella, Gadara, Hippos, Dium, Gerasa, Philadelphia, Raphana, Kanatha, and Damascus.

Their topography furnished the concrete and illustrative background for the majority of his great teachings. Galilee was Jesus' own home, and the cities around the lake which bears that name were the first to hear from him the wondrous words which have since uplifted and transformed the world. The reign of Antipas continued until 39 A. D. It, accordingly, included all the years, except perhaps the first, of Jesus' life. We may be sure, therefore, that Jesus knew Antipas sufficiently well to be his fair biographer. No character sketch could be more significantly pointed and brief than that left us concerning this Palestinian ruler. Jesus himself called him "that fox." [1]

Philip, tetrarch of the region of the Trachonitis, was in all respects the most estimable of the Herods. His rule extended from 4 B. C. to 37 A. D. It was marked by beneficence, freedom from excessive ambition, friendliness toward subjects and foreigners, and a successful policy for the maintenance of peace.[2] The general population of Philip's territory was not Jewish. He himself was Greek in his sympathies and tastes. New Testament history only occasionally touches upon points of interest within his realm. These center chiefly in the towns of Bethsaida, near the upper Jordan, and Cæsarea Philippi at the foot of Hermon. The latter of these became the scene of a momentous crisis in Jesus' ministry.[3]

While northern Palestine experienced no change of political government during the entire first generation of New Testament history, the situation in Judea was quite different. The procuratorship, which began with the deposition of Archelaus, lasted for thirty-five years, until 41 A. D. Of the seven procurators who held office during this time, only Pontius Pilate is here of interest. Like most of his predecessors, he was an unprincipled pagan. He was obstinate and cruel, and he lacked altogether in moral courage. After ten years of misgovernment

[1] Luke XIII:31.

[2] Philip's tetarchy comprised the territory between the Yarmuk River and Mt. Hermon, extending eastward from the Jordan to the desert. The names of the districts were Iturea, Trachonitis, Batanea, Gaulanitis, and Auranitis. It corresponded, in general, to the O. T. territory of Hauran.

[3] The crisis culminated in the Transfiguration.

he was deposed by order of Tiberius who was then Cæsar.[1] In the same year occurred the death of Tiberius. He was followed to the throne by Caligula.[2] His accession, marked a change in the affairs of the empire. He was cruel, vain and lustful, and at times of an unbalanced mind. At one time, when overcome by an obsession of insolent pride, he attempted to set up Cæsar-worship in the temple at Jerusalem. The attempt failed, however, through the intercession of Petronius then governor of Syria. Following the murder of Caligula, in 41 A. D., Claudius became emperor. In the same year Herod Agrippa I became king of the united kingdom of Judea. His rule was brief. It was characterized by a genuinely friendly attitude toward the Jews. He made his home in Jerusalem, where he observed, with due regard, the leading Jewish customs and the solemn religious festivals of the year. The Christians, however, did not share his general good-will. Following the popular Jewish example, he held them in open contempt. Once, at least, this hatred ripened into open hostility. This brief period of persecution, referred to in the book of the Acts, resulted in the martyrdom of the Apostle James, who was, at this time, together with Peter and John, a leader of the primitive Christian community in the city of Jerusalem.[3] Agrippa died violently and disgracefully in 44 A. D.[4] Thereafter Palestine once more came under the governorship of procurators, of whom Felix and Festus, who held Paul imprisoned in Cæsarea, alone attract the Bible reader's attention.[5]

The reign of the emperor Claudius lasted thirteen years. He was not a morally strong man; none of the Cæsars of this time were. His expulsion of the Jews from the city of Rome [6] gave

[1] Pilate's rule extended from 26 to 36 A. D.

[2] Tiberius reigned from 14 to 37 A. D., Caligula from 37 to 41 A. D.

[3] See Acts XII:1–2.

[4] See Acts XII:20–23.

[5] The Agrippa mentioned in Acts XXVI, who was the guest of Festus at Cæsarea during the time of Paul's trial, and before whom the apostle made the great public defense of his Christian faith, was Herod Agrippa II. He was a son of Herod Agrippa I, and was at the time king of the Trachonitis, the former tetrarchy of Philip.

[6] See Acts XVII:2.

him wide colonial unpopularity. He possessed, nevertheless, several marked and worthy traits in which he resembled Tiberius who was his uncle. He was, at any rate, a builder and an administrator. Nero, his successor, on the other hand, was a wanton, merciless, and wretched destroyer.[1] Judged as to both character and administrative efficiency, he was the most evil and utterly worthless of the emperors of the first Christian century. His viciousness and cruelty, his lust for excitement and fame, his responsibility for the conflagration of Rome, and his brutal attack upon the Christians, are common knowledge to every reader of history. The last four years of his reign were made terrible first for the Christians, then for the Jews, then for the people of Rome, and finally for Nero himself. The martyrdom of Peter and Paul in 64 A. D. was followed two years later by the outbreak in Palestine of the great Jewish War. Nero's death in 68 A. D. marked the beginning, at home, of a whole year of civil war brought to an end only by the rise to power of the succeeding emperor Vespasian.

III. THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

The anarchy which led to the final Jewish rebellion against Rome began under the procuratorship of Felix.[2] The leaders in the revolt were the Zealots. These extreme nationalists did not hesitate to resort to force of arms for the realization of their ideal of an established Messianic kingdom. By means of the hidden dagger or the unsheathed sword they hoped to win a way to Jewish freedom. This was their watchword: no king but Jehovah; no tax but that for the temple; no friend but the Zealot. The rebellion was at first an expression of ignorant but sincere fanaticism. The Zealots meant to do the right thing, but they had chosen the wrong and evil way. Unknowingly they had placed a premium upon lawlessness and bloodshed. As a result

[1] The dates for Claudius are 41–54 A. D.; those for Nero 54–68 A. D. They synchronize with the missionary career of the great apostle Paul who began his work in Antioch in 45 A. D., and was, in all probability, martyred at the decree of Nero in 64 A. D.

[2] Felix governed Judea from 52 to 58 A. D.

they were soon joined by certain murderous bands known as the Sicarii, who went about stealthily with hidden daggers under the folds of their cloaks and assassinated, among the prominent holders of political positions, those whom they would. During the rule of Festus [1] the hostility abated. Then under the last of the Roman procurators the storm broke out afresh. The story of the final struggle which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem is told by Josephus in his famous history known as the Jewish War.[2] The noted Jewish historian, according to his account, was himself a participant in the attempt of the Roman government to conciliate the fanatical Jews in the territory of Galilee. The undertaking failed. Josephus became involved in serious political complications. He found that he had fallen upon evil times. His clever diplomacy, however, saved him in each successive event. Even Vespasian, who marched the Roman army against Galilee, though he took Josephus captive, yielded to his friendly diplomacy and at last became his friend.

In 68 A. D., two years after the beginning of the revolt, Galilee yielded again to Roman subjection. The campaign, still under the direction of Vespasian, now converged rapidly toward Jerusalem. About this time the news reached Palestine that Nero had been driven to suicide and that Rome was in a state of anarchy. Hostilities against Jesusalem came to an immediate standstill while Vespasian journeyed hurriedly westward to claim the imperial throne. He succeeded and became Rome's next emperor.

Meanwhile Judea itself was rent and weakened by civil and fratricidal strife. Rival revolutionary forces contended for supremacy in Jerusalem. Then Titus the Syrian general arrived on the scene. In the spring of 70 A. D., just before the week of the Passover, he advanced to lay siege to Jerusalem. The assault continued for five months. The sufferings of the people, who had sought refuge in the city and had been imprisoned there, were indescribable. On the seventeenth of July the last daily sacrifice was offered in the temple. On the tenth of August the

[1] 58–62 A. D.

[2] See particularly Jew. War II, 20:6–21:10.

army of Titus burst through the outer temple wall. A firebrand from the hand of a Roman soldier gave the sacred structure to the flames, and with it perished the pride and glory of the Jewish race. Ten thousand men, women, and children met death by fire or by the sword. Those who survived within the wasted city were sold into slavery or selected for the terrible gladiatorial sport of the Roman arena. By September the ruin of the city was complete, and Titus withdrew, leaving the devastated area in the charge of the tenth Roman legion. The following year he returned to Rome where he was given a triumphant welcome by the nobles of the imperial city. A marble arch of triumph, erected by order of the Senate on the Via Sacra in Rome, still marks the victory and the tragedy of the memorable event.

During the years following the destruction of Jerusalem the government of Palestine was directly in the hands of the Roman emperor. The priestly sacrifices and the Sanhedrin disappeared; the latter at least temporarily, the former for all time to come. Zion became a memory and the Messianic hope was shattered. Nevertheless Judaism as a religion continued. Peace was again restored and thereafter maintained. Though the fate of the Jews was pathetic, they gradually came to be reconciled to it and turned for hope and comfort to the worship of the synagogue and to the study of the sacred law. Thus passed the years of Palestinian history from the period of the New Testament to the later and less eventful sub-apostolic age.

Palestine, however, continued to be, for two more generations, the allotted home of the Jews. Scholars arose among them who, in the course of time, turned more and more toward a study of the Hebrew scriptures. With Jerusalem in ruins the leading center of culture for the Jewish rabbis was the little western sea border town of Jamnia. By 90 A. D. a college of scribes had been organized there which, meeting in a body as an approved council, in that year passed upon and adopted the now universally accepted canon of Hebrew scripture.

A final uprising of the Jews against Roman dominion in Palestine occurred during the reign of the emperor Hadrian. The plan was conceived by him to rebuild Jerusalem and to

make of it a typical Roman colony. The Jews resident there petitioned for the privilege of undertaking, at this time, the reconstruction of the temple. The emperor announced that it was his purpose to erect instead a temple to Jupiter. Thereupon the old religious and patriotic passion of seventy years before again burst into flames. Coincident with this uprising a certain Jew appeared who boldly declared himself to be the Messiah. The rebellion spread rapidly under his leadership. The period of resistance lasted three years. When it ended, in 135 A. D., half a million Jews had fallen in battle, hundreds of villages and fortresses had been destroyed in the land, and Jewish youths and maidens numbering into the thousands had been captured for deportation to the already glutted slave markets of the world. This at last ended Jewish settlement in the land of Palestine. Hadrian built his temple as he had determined. By the side of that dedicated to Jupiter he ordered the erection of another to Venus. The Jews, horrified at the spectacle of desecration, were compelled forever to leave the city. All Jews thus became Jews of the dispersion; they became a people without a home. Scattered throughout the Roman empire, they were compelled, in increasing numbers, to seek their fortune as an outcast people in the market places and amid the daily surroundings of a generally unsympathetic Gentile population. Accordingly the words of Old Testament prophecy once more came to pathetic fulfilment; Israel's rôle in history was to continue to be one of suffering.

Something however remained for the Jewish people which Roman overlordship could not destroy. That was its religious faith. Israel's religion transcended all national and racial bounds. Its essence was of the divine spirit which lifts all men everywhere above the things of earth into the realm of the eternal. No train of misfortunes was able to lead these homeless Jews away from God. The consciousness of God, that had been their peculiar and age-old experience, and, in turn, their unique gift to the world, remained steadfast. The only regrettable limitation of this faith was that for several centuries past it had tended too much to become a fixed institution. It stood strong

and immovable. It yielded neither to outward persecution nor to further inward development and transformation. Though itself furnishing a fertile soil for the gospel seed of Christianity, it set itself immediately and deliberately against the historical movement for world redemption which it had created. The hostility of Judaism toward Christianity was tragic and inevitable. Legalism and prophetism in Hebrew seldom went hand in hand. Nor were the advocates of a political Messianism ever satisfied with a purely spiritual conception of the kingdom of God. There was a vitality in the Christian gospel which was destined to carry it beyond all barriers of nation and race. Christianity, emancipated from Judaism, became in one short generation a western and Gentile religion. It was a double misfortune for the Jew at this time to hate both Romans and Christians. The curse of this hostility followed him throughout the ensuing centuries. Yet the contribution he had made to the moral and spiritual life of the ages to come remained. Though himself virtually a social and political outcast, his faith lived on to bless the world. His profound consciousness of God, his lofty moral idealism, and the passion and persistence with which he held fast to the Messianic hope, were the marks of his religious genius. These were his gifts to the future. They became the immediate basis of the new Christian evangel. They provided a popular receptivity of mind for the teachings of Jesus; they serve as a source of inspiration to the first Christian disciples and apostles.

IV. RELIGION IN THE EMPIRE

The religious influences of the New Testament age were not exclusively Jewish. Greek philosophy, Roman mythology, and certain mystery religions of the East, had pervaded the thought of extensive areas of the empire. The Romans were an inherently practical people. The purely speculative and artistic interests of the Greeks, who were their immediate historical predecessors, moved them only slightly. In their desire to promote peace and uniform good will both at home and abroad, they welcomed all

agencies which furthered this ideal. A broad cosmopolitanism prevailed in religion as in citizenship.

Roman religion at this time still revealed many of its early animistic traits. The gods were rather unimaginatively conceived as impersonal powers, a multitude of vitally active and useful Numina. Notable within the system, however, was its focus upon the institution of the family. The father was the priest, the hearth the altar. Over the hearth fires presided Vesta, aided by the Lares, or ancestral spirits; the Penates, the protectors of the family store-room; and the beneficent Manes. Men, individually, were under the guardianship of their Genii; women looked for aid and protection to Juno. Proceeding from an emphasis upon the family, Roman religion soon became a matter of the state. Its trend had, from the beginning, been characteristically social. It now became organizational. It was dominated by the Roman genius for political government. Worship became an institution. Ceremonialism prevailed. The original *pater familias* of the home evolved into the grand pontifex of the state.

Side by side with this domestic development, two foreign influences had come to make themselves felt in the religious life of the Roman empire. The first of these was directly traceable to the Homeric mythology of the Greeks; the second to the developing mystery cults or religions of Asia Minor and the East. Greek mythology had begun its invasion into Roman territory early in the history of the Roman republic.[1] Official sanction of the Greek gods by the Roman state had been secured by the close of the fifth century B. C. They had entered Italy through its southern Greek colonies and by the literary road of the so-called Sibylline books.[2] Religion in Rome thereafter became Græco-Roman; and such it remained until the fourth century A. D., when it yielded to the victorious spread of Christianity.

[1] I. e., about 500 B. C.

[2] The Sibylline collection of Greek oracles was brought from Cumæ in the time of Tarquinius Superbus. Through one of the oracles the Cumæan sibyl or prophetess commanded them to be introduced into Rome. They wrought a radical transformation in Roman religion.

The mystery cults appeared at a time of spiritual crisis in Roman history. Religion had deteriorated, both in popular esteem and in moral worth. It had been reduced by its professional leaders, the priests, to an empty ceremonialism. Men and women of ideals and spiritually hungry were mocked by its failure to offer them strength and consolation. Its practices were held in ridicule by Rome's noblest statesmen and philosophers. Philosophy, moreover, could itself offer little actual spiritual solace. It did not touch directly the springs of action. It left men's hearts cold and their worthiest thoughts fruitless and dry. Philosophy was for the few. It transcended and neglected the masses. The result was that Rome, though outwardly powerful, was in danger of an imminent moral collapse. Augustus, the first of the emperors, clearly discerned the cause. It was apparent to him that nothing but a revival of religion could save the nation and the newly founded empire. Accordingly Cæsar-worship was introduced. The hope was that through it the patriotic impulse might awaken religion to a new life. A popular and personal need, nevertheless, remained which emperor-worship could not meet. The call was not only for an increased spirituality, but for a new and divine source of power, worthy of man's faith and sufficient for the trials of his life. The demand was for a religion of hope and of individual experience. The mystery cults, with their emphasis upon religious fellowship and human redemption, made an extraordinary appeal. The longing which they tended to satisfy was three-fold: (1) for forgiveness and freedom from the guilt of sin; (2) for fellowship with God; (3) for individual immortality.[1] What neither Greek philosophy nor Græco-Roman mythology, nor yet Judaism was able to do for the faith of the Roman world, these cults of mystery at least partly and temporarily accomplished. Their limitations, as we view them, were many. Morally some of them were upon a low plane. Theologically they were unsound and pagan. But as a means of grace, whereby,

[1] The most outstanding among these mystery cults were the worship of Dionysus, the worship of Demeter, the Eleusinian mysteries, Mithraism, and the Orphic brotherhoods. See Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. Vol. IX, p. 75.

in a spiritually dark age, human lives might be redeemed and saved from abysmal doubt and fear and sorrow, they not unworthily fulfilled their mission. How, despite their shortcomings, they helped in preparing the way for the incomparably greater message of Christianity, will become quite apparent with our later approach to the writings of Paul. It will serve our present purpose to add that, as guides to the ultimate reality or truth which underlies all true expressions of religion, the Oriental mysteries were of little value. They represented in themselves no new discovery in the wide realm of religious experience. They offered immediate and genuine individual consolation; but there was in them scarcely the hint of an attempted solution of the universal life problem. Their outlook upon the world led to submissiveness. Creative participation in a task leading toward the remedying of an existent evil was, so far as they were concerned, scarcely conceivable. The social value of the mystery religions lay in the direction of spiritual experience and not of moral reform. There was in them next to nothing of a dream of a better world, a redeemed humanity, a kingdom of God. They were able, for a time, to sustain the heart in its instinctive tendency to hope; but their teachings laid no lasting foundation for a reasonable faith. Such a foundation could be laid only by the New Testament monotheism whose living truths centered in the teachings and person of Jesus. It was his way of life for which the whole world was waiting. The prophets had prepared Palestine for his coming; and now the providential time of his arrival was at hand. The New Testament age had begun.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FOUR GOSPELS

THE Christian religion is not the idolatrous worship of a book. The New Testament derives its sacred character from the spiritual experiences of which it is the record. It centers in the religion and person of Jesus, whose revelation of God, and of the moral worth and spiritual resources of the human race, is the world's most supreme religious heritage. Jesus himself wrote no book; nor did he offer to the world a new code of laws or system of doctrine. Instead he talked to men about God, and exemplified his teachings by his own life. He gave himself. He taught men to look into their own hearts, rather than into any writing of sacred scripture, for the evidences of their kinship with God whom he called the Father. The New Testament was not the cause but the product of early Christianity. What is distinctive in the Christian gospel centers in a person and not in a book. The value of the New Testament lies in the faithful manner in which it has fulfilled its sacred office as the historical depository of the Christian faith. It has preserved the gospel truth in its original setting. Its teachings are seen as more than abstract principles or facts; they are truths become life. The spirit of adventure is in them. It is, above all, of Jesus' great adventure of fellowship with God that the Gospels tell. Their primary purpose is not one of religious doctrine, but of stimulation to spiritual experience. Their mission is fulfilled only when, through them, men become the participants of the life and experiences of Jesus.

Regarded historically the Gospels are incomplete records. They do not contain all the facts concerning the life of Jesus. Their fragmentary character is clearly indicated by one of the

Gospel writers.[1] For this fact there are two reasons. The one is that the greatness of Jesus eluded all attempts at a full comprehension of the meaning of his person and his words. The other is that, at the time of the appearance of the first written Gospel, nearly a generation had passed since the close of the earthly life of Jesus, and the historical information concerning him was no longer entirely available. The oral Gospel upon which, for almost a quarter century[2] the early Christian Church depended for its evangelistic message, had, by the process of selection which had brought it into being, gradually determined the content of the later written narratives. There were subsequent tributaries, but this oral Gospel formed the main stream of historical information concerning the life and times of Jesus. At the end of this formative period this stream emptied itself, in the main, into three literary channels. These were the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke. Because of their close mutual similarity they have become familiarly known as the Synoptic Gospels. This title serves also to distinguish them from the Fourth Gospel, or Gospel of John, which differs markedly from them both in content and in purpose.

I. THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

The oldest of the written Gospels is that of Mark. It is also the shortest and the most pictorial, the most purely narrative and clearly original of the biographies of Jesus. It reflects throughout the spirit and influence of the Christian apostle Peter. Its purpose is openly evangelistic. The writer aims at presenting a record of first-hand information, of unerring authenticity, about the life of Jesus. It is intended by him for missionary use among Gentile converts. The Gospel breathes a remarkable spirit of vitality and personal energy, it appeals to the heroic, it moves irresistibly to action. It is the Gospel of the works or acts of Jesus. Its style is simple, straightforward,

[1] See John XXI:25.

[2] Approximately from 30 to 55 A. D., at the end of which time literary fragments, including the Logia of Matthew, had probably made their appearance.

and dramatic. It is characteristically and realistically Roman.

Viewed chapter by chapter, Mark's Gospel suggests an art gallery of vivid pictures. From the viewpoint of literary structure, it is fragmentary. It presents itself clearly as a series of personal memoirs, prepared according to a topical arrangement, and thereafter cast into a simple chronological mold. The narrative may be divided into three general parts, corresponding to three periods in Jesus' public ministry: (1) the period of preaching; (2) the period of teaching; (3) the period of suffering.[1] The scenes of the first period are laid in Galilee; those of the second, in the main, in the regions of Tyre and Sidon, Cæsarea Philippi, and east of the lower Jordan. The closing scenes of Jesus' earthly life center in the city of Jerusalem. During the first part of his ministry Jesus is surrounded by the Galilean crowds. Later he gives himself to the little group of his more intimately devoted disciples. At the end he stands almost alone in a crowd of hateful persecuting enemies. One thought runs, like a golden thread, through the chapters of Mark's narrative. It is the thought of service. Jesus is the self-sacrificing, wonder-working servant and savior of men; the patient friend and helper of the needy; the strong and heroic, and at last triumphant son of God. The influence of Mark upon the succeeding Gospels is noteworthy and apparent. Its authenticity as a primary source of gospel information is beyond every doubt. It is the Magna Charta of the Christian faith. As such it deserves the Bible reader's first and most careful attention.

The Gospel of Matthew differs very noticeably from that of Mark. While Mark is intent solely upon presenting us with an orderly outline of the events in the life of Jesus, Matthew goes a necessary step further in giving these events their full historical meaning. The author of the first of these two Gospels is primarily a religious narrator; the writer of the second is, to a certain extent, a theologian and an interpreter. Mark's is

[1] The following is an outline of the Gospel by chapters: (1) Chap. I:14–VII:23; (2) Chap. VII:24–X:52; (3) Chap. XI:1–XVI:8. Chap. I:1–13 is introductory, and Chap. XVI:9–20 is a later addition to the Gospel. According to an ancient tradition this epilogue was the work of Aristion, a presbyter who lived a little after 100 A. D.

a Gospel of the acts of Jesus; Matthew's centers upon Jesus' words or discourses. It is the Gospel of Jesus the great teacher.[1] The most marked characteristic of the Gospel is its universality of religious outlook. Though giving evidence of a distinctly Hebrew background, or Jewish atmosphere, it is more than a New Testament message to Jews. It is a world Gospel whose Messiah is the long expected savior and redeemer of mankind. The author, despite the undertone of pathos in the Gospel, is an idealist. He is a dreamer and an evangelist. He looks forward toward a new and better age. It is to be an age characterized by a new state of human society. This newly created social state is to be composed of spiritually regenerated men and women. It is to be called the kingdom of God. Jesus himself has come to be not only its herald but its founder. The institution by which it is to be historically represented is the community of already existing believers known as the Christian church.

The Gospel of Matthew is symmetrically arranged. It is the work of an orderly mind. It is a Gospel with a program; it is authoritative, majestic, kingly. It culminates in an appropriately great climax. No New Testament writing more signally exalts both the teaching ministry and the sacrificial Messiahship of Jesus. Scholars have, for this reason, always held it in great ésteem. Keim, for example, called it "a grand old granitic book"; while Renan, speaking generally for its countless devoted admirers, says that it is "the most important book of Christendom, the most important book that has ever been written." [2]

The Gospel of Luke is, in its own way, no less extraordinary than that of Matthew. To the modern reader it seems, indeed, in most respects, the greater of the two. The reasons for this high estimate are not far to seek. They are, to a large extent, attributable to the writer's genius in developing a great theme.

[1] Note, e. g., The Sermon on the Mount in Mtt. V–VII; the collection of kingdom parables in Mtt. XIII; and the judgment discourses in Mtt. XXI–XXV.

[2] See D. A. Hayes, The Synoptic Gospels and the Book of the Acts, Part I, p. 17. The Life of Jesus, according to Matthew's Gospel, falls into five periods: (1) a preparatory period, I:1–IV:17; (2) the Galilean period, IV:18–XIII; (3) the Great Crisis, XIV–XVIII; (4) the Perean Period, XIX–XXV; (5) the passion and resurrection, XXVI–XXVIII.

In the case of this Gospel it may be said that the occasion, the subject, and the native equipment of the writer were alike far out of the ordinary. Luke was first of all an able historian. He wrote accurately, interestingly, and comprehensively. He investigated and gave heed to existing historical sources. The general order of events in his Gospel was that of Mark. Luke, however, was not satisfied with order only. He stressed logical symmetry, literary vigor and beauty, emotional and moral values, and adequately noble and lasting spiritual effects. His historical indebtedness to Matthew was likewise openly acknowledged. Here again, however, he was no mere borrower. Rather we should call him the transformer, the man of positive research, the artist, the spiritual inspirer and teacher.[1]

In beauty as in originality the Gospel of Luke is unsurpassed. Luke writes with the touch of the master. He possesses the keen logical faculty, the historical sense, the picturesque imagination, the rich vocabulary, the humanitarian spirit, and the inescapable emotional urge of the classical author. We note in him the deep insight which properly relates events to life, and outward movements to the inner nature and moral ideals of men. He interprets history in terms of its great characters.[2] He is, therefore, among the four Gospel writers, the one true biographer of Jesus. Biography, at the touch of his pen, becomes portraiture. His topics emerge as pictures, chiefly as portraits of Jesus, for which the general narrative provides the scenic and appropriate background. The stories centering upon Elizabeth and Mary, and Mary and Martha of Bethany, and the parables of Dives and Lazarus, the Good Samaritan, and the Prodigal Son, are familiar examples of Luke's inimitable style.[3] They reveal his genius for intimacy, his love of the domestic, his broad humanitarianism,

[1] The teachings of Jesus, known in Matthew's Gospel as the Sermon on the Mount, are by Luke given their natural historical setting. A number of the parables found in Luke IX–XIX are found nowhere else among the remaining Gospels.

[2] Note, in this connection, that Luke is the author, also, of the Book of the Acts.

[3] The following passages represent the Gospel material peculiar to Luke: Chs. I–III; IV:16–30; VII:11–17; VII:36–50; IX:51–56; X:25–37; X:38–42; XII:13–21; XIII:1–5; XIII:10–17; XV:11–32; XVI:1–12; XVI:19–31; XVII:11–19; XVIII:1–3; XVIII:9–14; XIX:1–10; XXIII:4–19; XXIII:39–43; XXIV:13–35.

and his evangelistic spirit. In all of these traits he resembles Paul, with whom he was often associated, and to whom he was himself greatly indebted.

The third Gospel falls chronologically into four parts: (1) Chapters I–IV, the birth, youth, and call of Jesus; (2) Chapters V–IX, the great Galilean ministry; (3) Chapters X–XVIII, the Perean ministry of Jesus: the training of the Twelve; (4) Chapters XIX–XXIV, the closing scenes of Jesus' life, centering in Judea and about Jerusalem.

II. THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM

A detailed study of the first three Gospels reveals their close similarity both in form and content. The resemblance goes beyond a common use of their source material. It extends to the chronological order of the narrative, and, beyond that, to a common phraseology. Their likeness to each other is matched by the contrast in which they stand to the Fourth Gospel. The differences between the Synoptics and the Gospel of John are so marked as to set this last Gospel wholly apart and in a class by itself. The ideas which separate them are as many as the years. No contradictions are involved in this separation. It is readily explained by the doctrinal development of the expanding Christian church, and by the author's own gift of literary and spiritual originality. The Gospels are one in the exaltation of the divine person and of the unique mission of Jesus. The differences which exist between them not only immeasurably enrich the volume of the Gospel story, but add the weight of their mutual agreement to the confirmation of Gospel authenticity.

The problem of discovering the causes which underlie the fact of the close unity that exists among the first three Gospel records, is, in the language of scholars, known as the Synoptic problem. More particularly, it involves a study of the so-called Gospel sources, both literary and oral. The aim of such an investigation is to trace, in the existing evangelistic narratives, the elements of the original Gospel. The attempt is justified by the urgent desire (1) to discover as far as possible the actual words

spoken by Jesus, and (2) to give them the truest position possible in the chronological order of the principal events of his life.

The most commonly accepted dates for the authorship of the Synoptic Gospels are these: Mark, 65–70 A. D.; Matthew, 75–80 A. D.; Luke, c. 80 A. D. Of the three narratives Mark is, by common consent, entitled to the place of historical priority. It is the shortest and least adorned of the Gospel records. Its aim is the most purely narrative. Its value as a source book was, from all appearances, fully appreciated by the other two Synoptists. So freely did they draw upon it for information that, of the approximately one hundred literary topics found in Mark, there are only three that do not appear also either in Matthew or Luke. On the other hand both Matthew and Luke contain a considerable number of items of which there is no trace in Mark. Again, it has been noted that the narratives of Matthew and Luke run closely parallel in those passages which they have in common with Mark. When, however, they come to incidents concerning which Mark is silent, the differences between them immediately come into the foreground. The conclusion is therefore simple and clear. It is Mark who holds Matthew and Luke together. He was their common source. Two further observations, accordingly, follow. The first is that Mark's Gospel was already in quite general circulation at the time the other two Synoptic Gospels were written. The second is that wherever Matthew and Luke together record events in the life of Jesus which are not found in Mark, they are evidently making use of some other mutually accessible historical source. Investigation reveals that the principal elements of this source are the teachings of Jesus. Scholars are in very general agreement in identifying it with a primitive collection of the discourses of Jesus, known as the Logia, which, according to the report of an early church father, was originally made and preserved in writing by the disciple Matthew.[1] Greek translations of Matthew's Logia

[1] The collection of the Logia is referred to by the church historian Eusebius who, writing in the Fourth century, quotes from the writings of Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in the first half of the Second century, as follows: "Now Matthew com-

were probably given a wide circulation. The present Gospel of Matthew, of which the Logia formed the nucleus, attests to the importance and to the historical authenticity of this body of Jesus' teachings.[1]

A comparative study of Matthew and Luke leads, in addition, to this final conclusion. There are sections in which these two Gospels are widely different from each other, and therefore wholly independent of each other. There are topics in each of which no traces are found in the other. These differences point unmistakably to the existence of additional biographical sources. Either access to them was limited and local, or the selection of material from them was determined by the Gospel writer's personal judgment. These sources may have been partly written and partly oral. If oral, they were subject to slight literal variations. No two sets of stories, perpetuated for a quarter of a century through independent or partially independent channels of oral communication, could be expected to remain absolutely alike and unchanged. The human as well as the divine element was present in the original formation of the sacred scriptures. That such variant accounts, or primitive Gospel versions, existed cannot be doubted. Luke, the skilled historian, himself refers to them in his own Gospel preface in which he says that "many have undertaken to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed."

The solution of the Synoptic problem is, accordingly, somewhat as follows. 1. The two most valuable original Gospel sources are the narrative of Mark and the Logia of Matthew. Whether or not Mark was itself the result of a process of development from a primitive Ur-Markus, we do not as yet know.

posed the sayings of the Lord in the Hebrew language, and everyone interpreted them as he was able."

[1] Some scholars incline toward the opinion that, just as the present Gospel of Matthew is the outgrowth of the original Logia of Matthew, so Mark's Gospel was preceded by an earlier outline of the principal events in the life of Jesus. The name given to this original collection of memoirs is Ur-Markus. One of the best presentation of the entire question of the Gospel sources—of the Petrine Tradition, and the so-called "Second Source"—is that offered by Professor B. W. Bacon in his volume "The Story of Jesus."

The Logia, it is apparent, in passing through its translations from the Aramaic into the Greek, and thereafter into the several versions in local use, did not long stand alone. It became the nucleus for the preservation of additional current Gospel stories, which prepared it to become, with Mark, one of the two chief sources available to the authors of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.[1] Of these two original Gospels, the Logia, which through augmentation has come to be called Q, is probably the older. The dates for them belong somewhere between 50 and 60 A. D. They are thus contemporary with the great missionary career and writings of Paul.

2. Both Mark and Q—or the documentary source of which it was a part—were used freely but discriminately by the unknown author of Matthew and the historian Luke. For the chronological order of their narratives they depended largely upon Mark; for their record of the teachings of Jesus they made extensive use of Q.

3. The difference between Matthew and Luke suggests not only originality of method and style, but the use of independent sources.[2] These divergences suggest (1) that not all of the teachings of Jesus are found recorded in the New Testament, and (2) that the Gospel narrators proceeded discriminately and selectively in their compilation of the evangelistic record.

4. The Gospels must be studied in detail and comparatively for a discovery of the actual words of Jesus and the events which furnish their background. The process of searching for Bible texts among the pages of these sacred writings must be

[1] The Logia, thus augmented by narrative biographical material, has been given the name "Q" which is the abbreviation of Quelle, meaning fountain or spring. Strictly speaking, Q is not to be regarded as an originally independent and complete literary document. Rather it is that body of source material common to Matthew and Luke, but not contained in Mark. The original source itself—known today simply as the "Second Source"—contains, in addition to Q, other material used alike by Mark, Matthew, and Luke. This additional material, because of its Poetical and autobiographical emphasis upon the inner life and experiences of Jesus, has been given the name "Midrash." Q, on the other hand, consists largely of discourses, i. e., of the Logia.

[2] Note, e. g., Matthew's fondness for ordered discourse, and Luke's preference for the parable, as revealed in their presentation of Jesus' teachings.

supplemented by a careful topical analysis of parallel portions of the Gospel narrative. These unidentical versions not only enrich the Gospel content but offer the best possible assurances of its historical authenticity. Their consensus is proof of a reasonable literal preservation of the Gospel text; their marked divergence, on the other hand, is evidence of the presence of varying historical or doctrinal influences in the composition of the Gospel narratives. As in the case of the lives and characters of the greatest of the first Christian Apostles, so with their writings: human perfection was no actual barrier to divine inspiration. The Gospel writers were directed in their sacred task by the perfecting spirit of God, whose presence manifested itself as that unifying influence which, in all times, both present and past, has led the searching minds and hearts of men freely but inevitably to the truth.

III. THE FOURTH GOSPEL

With our approach to the Gospel of John we take a decided step forward in the course of New Testament history. The Synoptic narratives, as we have them, were probably completed by 80 A. D. The destruction of Jerusalem, in 70 A. D., and the previously ended notable missionary activities of Paul, had gradually shifted the geographical center of the Christian world, first northward from Palestine proper to Syria, then westward through Asia Minor to Ephesus. The early apostolic days were over, and the generation of Christian disciples, to whom the gospel story was a treasured personal memory, had passed away. Christianity had become a world religion. The urgent demand of the time was not for more elaborate historical information concerning its origin, but for a new interpretation of its essential meaning and message to the world. The key to the interpretative unfolding of the mysteries of the Christian Gospel was found in the person of the risen and living Christ. Christianity, as it had come to be defined, was a movement among men universally for the realization of an abundant and everlasting spiritual life through the experience of a loving faith in Jesus

Christ. That had been Paul's message to the growing Gentile churches. It had been the one truth remembered in the oft-repeated simple story of Peter. Its meaning was not difficult to comprehend by those peoples familiar with the mystery religions and the speculative philosophies of the empire. This was particularly true of the population of Asia Minor where the Fourth Gospel was written and at first circulated. The author of the Gospel was himself a mystic and a philosopher. He was a Hebrew who had, at one time, been a resident of Palestine. The general dispersion of the Jews following the destruction of Jerusalem, in 70 A. D., had brought him to Asia, probably to Ephesus. Whether or not the writer was the apostle John, one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus, is not definitely known. Ancient tradition steadfastly holds to this view. Present day scholarship, familiar with the difficulties its acceptance involves, does not arbitrarily either affirm or deny the Johannine authorship of the Gospel.

The background of the Gospel is one of strange doctrinal and spiritual disturbance. The time is approximately 90 A. D. Christianity in Asia Minor was undergoing serious outward and inward changes. Gnosticism, with its intermingling of Greek and Oriental philosophy, was exerting a marked influence upon Christian thought.[1] The Gospel of the earthly life of Christ was being transformed into an allegorical myth representing the struggle between the cosmic forces of good and evil. Jesus, it was maintained, was born and died utterly human. The Christ, clearly and sublimely distinguishable from him, came to Jesus at the baptism and left him on the cross. Jesus was therefore not himself the Messiah or Saviour, but merely the symbol of our common humanity, temporarily exalted and enlightened through an intermediary contact with the divine.

The Fourth Gospel, with its dual emphasis upon the divinity of Jesus and upon the genuineness of his earthly incarnation,

[1] The chief elements in the Gnostic heresy, as they touched the Fourth Gospel, were its philosophical dualism, its attitude toward the flesh as evil, its tendencies toward heathen practices, and especially its Docetism, i. e., its denial of the genuineness of the incarnation and of the earthly life—particularly of the sufferings—of Jesus.

was the greatly needed reply to this Gnostic or Docetic heresy.[1] The difference between this Gospel and the three Synoptics is accordingly, by these circumstances, as clearly interpretable as it was historically justified. The Gospels were written, first of all, for their own time. The first generation of Christians needed only the Gospel story. The generation that followed, living both in time and place beyond the direct influence of early Gospel memories, depended, for the message it received, upon intermediate interpreters. Christianity, without losing, as yet, (and for a long time to come) its simple historical association with the life and character of Jesus, gradually became theological. The transition was inevitable; it was in the line of historical progress. But it was progress away from the early simplicity of the religion of Jesus to the more profound, though noble and saintly, apostolic religious teachings about Jesus.

The differences of content between the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John are significant and many. The Synoptists were biographers. They wrote of what they had seen or heard concerning the teaching, the healing, and the suffering ministry of Jesus. Mark was impressed by Jesus' spirit of lowly, yet heroic service; Matthew followed him in his kingly career as the master teacher. Luke, using his pen as a painter's brush, charmed his readers with captivating portraits of the human and gracious aspects of the character of Jesus. The author of the Fourth Gospel, probably acquainted with these early biographies and taking them for granted, proceeded to his new task of extolling the divine person and redemptive mission of Jesus. The Gospel itself is a literary and religious masterpiece. Though markedly Hebraistic, its Greek, written after the manner of the ancient classical dialogue, runs on with a beautiful simplicity through a field of profound thought. The framework of the Gospel is historical. Its plan, on the contrary, is essentially topical. In depth of spirituality it is one of the noblest of the New Testament writings. It is the Gospel of the cosmic Christ, the

[1] The principal teacher of Docetism, against whom the Fourth Gospel appears to have been directed, was Cerinthus, who taught in the province of Asia c. 90 A. D.

Gospel of eternal life. In it every act of Jesus is but a sacred symbol or parable setting forth some specific aspect of his divine person and character. Devotionally it has no equal in the Gospel literature. Like the Apostle Paul before him, the author becomes wholly absorbed in Jesus Christ. Christ is light and love and life. He is the Christian's all in all; he is at human history's beginning and at its end. He is God's true and beloved son. Doctrinally it opened a clear path between two opposing late first century heresies: Gnosticism, with its denial of the divinity and preëxistence of Jesus; and Docetism, with its disregard for the humanity of Jesus. Historically it has become the great text-book of the Christian pulpit, and the spiritual guide of countless followers of Christ. Origen, one of the Greek fathers, called it the crown of the Gospels; and Christian art, true to both popular and scholarly tradition, has given it the symbolism of the soaring eagle, majestic in its glory and its power.[1]

[1] The Fourth Gospel falls, according to its chapters, into three sections: (1) The divine manifestation of Christ as Life, Chs. I–IV; (2) The conflict between Light and darkness, between Christ and his foes, Chs. V–XII; (3) The divine manifestation of Christ as Love, Chs. XIII–XX. I:1–18 is the prologue to the Gospel; Ch. XXI is an appendix or epilogue.

CHAPTER XX

THE EARLY LIFE OF JESUS

As a historical movement Christianity had a simple and humble beginning. Its founder was born of lowly parentage and lived his whole life amid comparatively limited external surroundings. Yet the influence that has emanated from the life and person of Jesus has encircled the earth: it has produced first, the New Testament; second, the Christian church; and third, the sound bodily structure and the living spirit of our modern civilization.

The preparation of a well ordered chronological narrative of the life of Jesus, based upon all the data of the four Gospels, is an exceedingly difficult if not impossible task. The difficulty lies with the divergence of the Fourth Gospel from the Synoptic record. The principal events are at variance. So also are the details which furnish the geographical background. The author of the Fourth Gospel, whose arrangement of material is in reality topical, gives much more attention to the demands of chronology than do the Synoptists. He presents a chain of references which, if followed closely, extend the public ministry of Jesus to three years, and depict it as centering, in the greater part, about Jerusalem and Judea.[1] The Synoptic evangelists, on the other hand, though writing biographically, quite disregard chronology, and center Jesus' ministry in and about Galilee. The plan of the latter group seems, on the whole, the more closely in keeping with the Gospel requirements. Following, accordingly, the Synoptic account, our study of the life of Jesus will be divided into four general periods: (1) the early life of Jesus; (2) the Galilean ministry; (3) the border ministry; (4) the passion and resurrection.

[1] These references are: II:13–23; IV:35; V:1; VI:4; VII:2; X:22; XI:55.

I. THE YEARS OF PREPARATION

The oldest existing Gospel records omit all preliminary reference to the birth and childhood of Jesus. They begin at once with what seemed, at the time, of most outstanding importance, namely, Jesus' call to his public ministry. The call is preceded by the preparatory mission of John the Baptist. He ushers in the new Messianic age. Then Jesus himself appears with the joyous message of deliverance, the message of the kingdom, with its glad gospel of life. Matthew and Luke, however, are not satisfied with a fragmentary or briefly concentrated gospel. They are interested in beginnings. They must go to the original spiritual sources to account for the greatness of Jesus and for the supreme manifestation of the grace of God which attended his earthly life. The two writers differ sufficiently to show us their literary independence. Luke tells the story of the visiting angels; Matthew of the star-led magi. Luke records the immediate return of Joseph and Mary, with the child Jesus, to Nazareth; Matthew their hasty flight and sojourn in Egypt. Both affirm the supernatural origin, or virgin birth of Jesus; yet both trace his ancestry, not through Mary, but through Joseph. The evangelists saw in the character of Jesus something which they recognized as extraordinary and unique. They knew him to have been divine. Their experience had told them so. It was a conviction to which, as followers of Jesus, they had fully attained. This conviction had come as a result of the retrospect with which, with the passing years, they had been able to view the entire wondrous course of his life. They believed him to be the son of God. Subsequent history authenticated this claim to uniqueness. The divinity of Jesus was attested by his perfect revelation of the nature and character of God.

Such a revelation, the evangelists believed, must have a more than moral ground. Its only adequate explanation lay in the field of the biological. Jesus was divine from his birth. A life such as his could not have had a purely human source. Humanity was not of itself considered either capable or worthy of becoming an intimate partner with God in the creation of a

sinless character. The implications of such an attitude in its reflection, both upon the moral possibilities of the human race and upon the omnipotence of God, were not, in ancient days, so clearly discerned as the centuries of Christian thought since then have helped us to see them. Life in the Roman empire was morally upon a very low level. Among the Jews the experience of prolonged adversity had served to intensify the sense of sin and guilt. Faith in human nature was at a low ebb. Paganism had given even to parenthood a moral taint in the minds of the noblest men of antiquity. Great men were, accordingly, often believed to have been miraculously born. That Jesus did not himself share this popular pagan view is certainly apparent. If he had, he would not, in his quest for an adequate name or title for his conception of God, have chosen the word father. As in the account of the creation, the emphasis in the narrative of the virgin birth is not upon the order of generation, but upon the great truth of God Himself was the creator. Behind the life and character of Jesus—as behind the universe itself—stood God. With this view the opening chapter of the Fourth Gospel, with its noble doctrine of the divine Logos, is in complete agreement.[1]

Side by side with the emphasis, in the Gospels, upon the divine character of Jesus is the fact of his humanity. While clearly stated by each of the three Synoptists, this fact comes most vividly and attractively to the foreground in the narrative of Luke. Luke is particularly drawn to Jesus as the son of man. He sees in him assembled all the noblest gifts and supreme graces of mankind. Jesus is, in epitome, the fulfilment of all human promise and hope. The story of his life is replete with human interest. He shares from first to last the sorrows and joys of our common humanity. He begins his life in a cradle; he is obedient to his parents; he grows as a normal child in body, in mind, and in spirit; he asks questions of grave and wise elders; he learns a trade, and works at it for a living; he spends such time as opportunities for leisure permit in natural contact with fields and streams and mountains; he hears the call to the world

[1] See in this connection Rom. I:3; Rom. VIII:3; Rom. IX:5; Gal. IV:4.

of men, the call to a life of service; he is tempted, both repeatedly and severely; his public career begins auspiciously amid popular applause; he arouses resentment by the moral severity of his uttered messages; he calls followers to be his disciples, and, in times of crises, clings to them as one who thirsts for friendship; he senses the ominous approaching shadow of the cross; his days are days of toil and prayer; he grows weary under the heavy load which he bears for his fellowmen; he is straitened by the urgency of his mission, by the desire to fulfil his dream of establishing the kingdom of God; he faces his foes, not forgetting his friends; and he goes at last to his death, the perfect pattern of a Godlike and a perfect man.

The birthplace of Jesus, according to Matthew and Luke, was the little Judean town of Bethlehem. There are references elsewhere in the Gospels which point to Nazareth as the place of his nativity, but the evidence they present is not conclusive.[1] The date of his birth is determined by the Gospel references to the reign of Herod and to the first enrolment under Quirinius.[2] It was probably, according to our modern calendar, either 4 or 6 B. C. The exact time of the year is a point of uncertainty. Since the fourth century of our Christian era, however, it has been definitely associated with the period of the winter solstice and dated at approximately the twenty-fifth of December.[3]

The childhood home of Jesus was situated among the beautiful hills of the comparatively fertile and free territory of Galilee. The village of Nazareth, in which dwelt the family of Joseph the carpenter, lay in a mountain hollow or depression,

[1] See, e. g., Mtt. VI:1–4 and Mtt. XIII:54.

[2] Although Quirinius was not governor of Syria until 6 A. D., it is now assumed, upon the basis of newly discovered historical evidence, that he may have previously conducted the census referred to in Luke II:2. If so, it was at the time he was under appointment by the Roman legate of Syria, i. e., about 6 B. C.

[3] Professor Kent, in the Historical Bible, Vol. V, p. 48, recounts the interesting story of an Egyptian papyrus roll, recently published by the German scholar Oefele, and now found in the British Museum, in which there is a record of astronomical data pointing to a series of remarkable conjunctions of the planets Jupiter and Saturn. These conjunctions occurred between the dates of April 15 and December 27, in the year 6 B. C. The data led Oefele to the conclusion that on December 27 of that year Jupiter became a stationary planet located in the region of the constellation Aries. This planet he identified as the Star of Bethlehem.

a natural amphitheater, from the outer and upper rim of which the boy Jesus could look out upon the world, of which, in due time, and thereafter for all time, he was to become a part. Scarcely twenty miles to the west, and clearly visible, stood the historic Mt. Carmel, and beyond it lay the glimmering Mediterranean. Nearer to the east were the Jordan valley and the inland sea of Galilee. To the south, extending almost across Palestine, lay the great Plain of Esdraelon, famous in Hebrew history for its battle scenes and as a thoroughfare for the armies of conquerors and the caravans of commerce.

The population of Galilee had at a previous time been of a markedly Gentile intermixture. In the days of the New Testament, however, it had become predominantly Jewish.[1] Elements of foreign influence had remained, and were in evidence in the speech, the manners, and the religious ideas of the people. Because of them the Galileans were held in contempt by the comparatively isolated and therefore more culturally and racially aristocratic Judeans. This contempt, it appears, was, however, not without an element of justifiable envy. For there were three respects, at least, in which this northern area of Palestine excelled Judea in the south: it was of greater natural fertility; it was more freely and therefore less fanatically patriotic; it was more tolerantly and less institutionally religious. Northern Palestine was rude in culture, and Nazareth was a village of no good reputation. Nevertheless from this Galilean soil came not only Jesus, but the majority of his disciples.[2]

The Gospel records are almost altogether silent concerning the years of Jesus' preparation for his life work. We are told by Luke that they were years of normal youthful development. They were marked by the one natural and promising characteristic of vigorous youth: they were years of growth in bodily strength, in mental capacity and activity, and in ex-

[1] Galilee was repeopled by the Jews and made a Jewish dominion by John Hyrcanus about 100 B. C. Just prior to that time, it had been populated by the encompassing Gentile inhabitants of Syria, Phœnicia, the Greek Decapolis, and the more remote borders of the desert of Arabia.

[2] Jerome writes, in his Script. Eccl. that the parents of St. Paul belonged to the Galilean town of Gischala.

cellency of moral and spiritual character. Joseph was a good parent to his children. In addition to Jesus, Mary's first-born son, there were other brothers and sisters in the Nazareth carpenter's family. Mention is made of four brothers; the number of sisters is not known. The home was one of simplicity, industry, and genuine religious piety. Diligent work, wholesome and youthful recreation, daily manifestations of love, and ordered yet free seasons of worship made up its hallowed routine. Life for Jesus in Joseph's household must have been subject to discipline, but it was not robbed of its spontaneity. Throughout his whole later life, despite its external deprivations, he gave no signs of the traces of an ascetic influence.

The religious life of every Jewish child was nurtured by a well ordered plan of education. He was taught the scriptures and instructed in the faith of his fathers. We may suppose, therefore, that the presence of the sacred book of the law was as indispensable in the house of Joseph as were the rudimentary tools with which, through his occupation, he earned the family's daily bread. The education of Hebrew children, even in Bible times, was, however, not limited to the home. Every village had its synagogue which served, not only as a place of religious worship and popular assembly, but as an elementary school. General instruction, both religious and secular, was offered there to every Jewish boy and girl. No historical statement is needed to inform us that, at the age of seven, the child Jesus was sent to the synagogue school at Nazareth to receive the benefits of its training.

The eldest son of the Hebrew family usually followed his father's trade or occupation. Accordingly it was not planned that Jesus should attend the scribal college whose teachers were the eminent rabbis and doctors of the law, and in which Jewish youths were prepared for the religious professions. Upon one brief occasion only, during his early years, did he approach the realization of what, it is evident, must have been the fond hope of his maturing years. The incident which led to it makes its appearance as a lonely and solitary ray of light cast by the Gospel pages across the path of the significant formative years

of Jesus' life. At the age of twelve he is unexpectedly discovered in the very midst of the circle of august and learned rabbinical doctors. His questions delight and astonish them. He is in his own spiritual element. It is the place where he should remain. The great teachers understand and offer their sympathy. But not so the parents, though Mary does remember and dream thereafter, wondering at the mysterious future which, she now feels, awaits her child. For Jesus, however, the Jerusalem school days are ended. There have been only a few of them. He returns to Nazareth a dutiful and obedient carpenter's son. But he is never again to be the same youth. He has entered into a unique experience of fellowship and partnership with God. Henceforth his life is to be dedicated to a divine mission. The definite call to his ministry lies as yet in the distance. The consecration, however, whereby he is to prepare himself to receive it, has begun.

Thereafter follow eighteen years of further preparation. Death removes the father of the household, and Jesus, now a young carpenter, is called upon to provide for the support of the family. The shop and the market lay claim upon much of his time. He associates with his fellow Galileans in worship and in toil. Day after day he is seen at his bench, and every Sabbath finds him in his place in the village synagogue. Years pass, dream years, years of holy communion, happy years of obscurity, over which history has drawn the kindly and unruffled mantle of silence. Then, when he is thirty years of age, he answers the divine summons. The Messianic age has dawned at last. It is being heralded by a new Judean prophet. This prophet is John the Baptist.[1]

John was the son of an elderly Judean priest named Zacharias. He had from birth been dedicated to the service of God. The

[1] Information of interest may possibly have been brought to light in connection with the so-called Tibetan story of Christ, known also as the Gospel of Issa, reported, as early as 1894 and again more recently, to have been found at the Hemis monastery in Little Tibet. The manuscript purports to be an account of the life of Jesus covering the period between the ages of twelve and twenty-nine years. The story is that during this time Jesus disappeared from Palestine, having gone with a merchant caravan to Tibet, where he studied the laws of Gautama Buddha and preached to the Buddhists.

vow which he had taken upon himself as a Nazarite had taken him into the open wilderness of Judea, there to meditate upon the past history and fortune of his people, and to seek the preparation necessary for his public mission. On the day of his first prophetic appearance he was found preaching in the region called Bethany beyond Jordan. Multitudes of people from Judea and from the surrounding country were gathering to hear his word. The region soon became the scene of a mighty religious awakening. Messianic expectancy ran high as the voice of prophecy was once more heard in the land. The time of deliverance for Jehovah's people was believed to be imminent. John himself shared this view, and it became, spiritually interpreted, the burden of his message. He regarded himself as the simple but God-appointed herald of a new world era. The kingdom of God was come even to Israel's very door. It was a time that called for action. The first step was preparedness; and the way to it was universal spiritual repentance.

II. THE DIVINE COMMISSION

Since the report of John's work had reached Galilee, five men, who were afterward to become Jesus' own followers, had preceded him to the scene of the revival. They were John, Andrew, Simon later surnamed Peter, Philip, and Nathanael. John and Andrew, the sons of Zebedee, a Galilean fisherman, had apparently already become followers of the wilderness prophet. Then Jesus appeared and straightway offered himself for baptism. This religious rite, already sacred because of its intimate historical association with the priestly ceremony of the sacrificial ablution, was now invested with a new significance. It was made the symbol of moral and spiritual regeneration. To the Baptist it served the further purpose of enlisting men to give their pledges of faith and allegiance to the coming Messianic kingdom.

As a symbol of spiritual rebirth the baptism of Jesus was of no special importance. His life had given no sign of a moral taint. He had from the beginning lived in intimate fellowship

with God. The desire to do the Father's will had from the first been an impelling element in his nature. It was to bear testimony to his faith in John's message, and to assume his own part in bringing the prophet's ideal to an immediate realization, that Jesus now presented himself for the ceremony. It is not improbable, moreover, that his own experience of the possibility, or of the actual fact of temptation, entered into his decision. If so, he wished by this act openly to avow his inherent kinship with his fellowmen, and to fortify himself against the hour of trial which, he perceived, lay immediately in the future. It was there, as he stood in the midst of the onlooking and spiritually hungry multitudes, eager with the expectancy of wondering children, and appealing for that which made them kindred with him in the great human adventure of the soul's quest for God, that he definitely heard the call of God. It was a vivid and dramatic moment in his life. The heavens were opened and the brooding creative spirit of God was upon him. God had chosen him for a special and supreme sonship. Somehow, in a yet only partially revealed way, he was to be the spiritual teacher and deliverer of his people.[1]

Jesus' brief sojourn with John beside the Jordan ended with his return to Judea. But he did not go at once to Jerusalem. The stress of solemn thoughts led him toward the solitude of the open country. He wished to be alone. A strange compulsion was upon him, now that he had arrived at a full realization of his mission. His experience amid the multitudes beside the Jordan had awakened him unmistakably to a new and three-fold consciousness. He was aware, first of all, of the peculiar character of his intimate relationship to God. Secondly, the sense of God's nearness had put into his possession an immeasurable divine power which he must use for the service of mankind. Finally, he felt within himself a ripening and an all-absorbing passion to know and to do the will of the Father. The question which now presented itself fully before him concerned his future course of action. How was he to establish the kingdom of God

[1] Here compare with the story of the baptism, Luke IV:18, the quotation from Isaiah LXI, and note how Jesus applies the prophetic experience to himself.

and thus fulfil his mission? What kind of work was he to do? How should he strive to be victorious? The forty days that followed were spent in the wilderness. They were days of spiritual travail and temptation. He partook of no food; he sought utter solitude; only the wild life of the desert gave him companionship. He prayed.

The first of the temptations had to do with the God-appointed use of his powers. More particularly it concerned the question of his own self-preservation. Can the work of a great leader be brought to fruition and survive if the leader himself be allowed to perish? Is it not the first duty of a strong man to protect himself? If so, can power be put to both a greater test and a greater use than to convert stones into bread? Jesus answers no. Man does not live by bread alone; he has a spiritual nature whose hunger can be satisfied only by the word of God.

The second temptation was to escape the hazards which attend the possession of great power. The way out was to tax Providence with a demand for special protection. Why should a man face grave and subtle dangers and take great risks to do great things? Let him first have the assurance of a safe outcome. There could be no better test of God's presence, or more convincing proof of Jesus' divine power, than a spectacular leap from the pinnacle of the temple. Jesus met the temptation with the overpowering conviction that it was not right for man to test God. God is not to be put on trial. His children are to accept Him with complete confidence and trust. If a test of true sonship is needed, it will be found in a life of absolute and daily obedience to the revealed will of the Heavenly Father. Perfect sonship, Jesus must have been assured, was in reality a moral and spiritual achievement and not an arbitrarily claimed special prerogative.

The third and greatest temptation which confronted Jesus was the call to compromise. How could spiritual ends, however worthy, be attained without the aid of worldly agencies? Two ways lay open toward the goal of the Messianic kingdom. The one was the way of popular approval, of conquest by the use of external force, of allegiance with self-promoting men and

institutions. It was the broad and general way of worldly success. The other was the narrow way: the way of spiritual meekness, of self-sacrifice and trust; the way of plain duty, of individual reason, of moral conviction; in short, the solitary way of God and of the noble human soul. Once clearly discerned, Jesus unhesitatingly chose the latter. He came out of the wilderness of the temptation triumphant in the consciousness of but one thought: he would serve God and Him only, at all cost. The genuineness of the temptations of Jesus admits of no doubt. We learn from the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews that the divine character of Jesus was the outcome of victory over temptation, not freedom from it.[1] In order to be tempted in all points as men were, he must have been completely one with mankind. It is in his perfect humanity, therefore, that his divinity is most clearly revealed. The character and will of God found in the person of Jesus their true manifestation.

[1] See Hebrews IV:15. Also Luke IV:13 and XXII:28. These references make it clear that Jesus was often face to face with temptation, and that he was comforted and strengthened, at such times, by the helpful presence of the disciples.

CHAPTER XXI

THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

If we accept the authority of the Synoptic narrative, the actual public ministry of Jesus began in Galilee.[1] The early scenes of his preaching center in Capernaum, a village by the Galilean seaside. The time is shortly after the imprisonment of John. His arrest has put an end to the religious revival in Judea, and the people of Galilee whom it once attracted have returned to their northern homes. Four men, Simon and Andrew, and James and John, who probably had been among the Baptist's loyal followers but had returned to their fishermen's nets, have again answered the call and become Jesus' first disciples. The first message of Jesus, like that of John, is an announcement of the advent of the kingdom. It is a call to repentance and to faith. But there is in it a new note: joyousness and hope sound through the Gospel message. Jesus is the bearer of good news. His words bring healing; they promise deliverance; they themselves are life.[2] The people come to him in multitudes, and they do not return unrewarded. He gives them of his strength and sympathy. Many before him have come offering wise counsel and teaching great truths. Jesus offers himself. Without display, and without stint, he clearly reveals the motive which impels him to such noble service. The people recognize that he loves them and they respond to him. He does more than warn the erring; he wins them by understanding their spiritual need. Thus he directs them to God whom he calls the universal Father. All humanity is entitled to sonship; he himself is the son of man.

[1] The Fourth Gospel records an early Judean ministry of Jesus. If there was such a ministry the period was short and ended with the arrest and imprisonment of John.

[2] This note of joy, in particular, pervades the Gospel of Luke.

I. THE GOOD NEWS

According to Mark's Gospel the Galilean ministry of Jesus falls into four periods. The first was one of rising popularity. It centered in Capernaum, and, more particularly, in the Jewish synagogue in that village. It was of brief duration. The second was marked by Jesus' departure for the open country and the seashore. His work became more distinctly public. People outside of Galilee heard of it and came to see him. Antagonism, at first mild then strongly assertive, began to arise. About this time Jesus also began the use of the parable as an effective form of open discourse. The third period was marked by a series of retreats and wanderings in the Gentile regions surrounding Galilee: first in the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon; then in the region of the Decapolis; and finally in the territory on the east banks of the Jordan north of the Lake of Galilee. The fourth period, too, was spent almost altogether outside of Galilee. It was a period of journeyings about the lake, of frequent withdrawals from the gathering and crowding multitudes, of intimate contact with the small disciple group, of emphasis upon the mission of teaching, of intermittent seasons of solemn spiritual brooding and of midnight vigils, and, finally, of the culminating crisis represented in the scene of the transfiguration of Jesus which marked the end of his ministry in northern Palestine.[1]

Two reasons, at least, may be given for Jesus' choice of Capernaum as the scene of his early ministry. The first was that its population was distinctly Jewish; the second, that it was at the meeting point of two important public highways—the one extending from Egypt to Babylonia, the other from Arabia to Phœnicia. The remaining cities along the Lake of Galilee were Greek in population and culture. Capernaum stood almost alone as a center of Jewish life amid Gentile surroundings and at the

[1] By chapters in Mark's Gospel the periods are indicated as follows: (1) I:14–III:6; (2) III:7–VII:23; (3) VII:24–VIII:26; (4) VIII:27–IX:50. It will be noted that of the four periods here outlined, only the first two are definitely Galilean. The remaining two may be more aptly designated as periods of the great Border Ministry of Jesus. This designation is adopted in the next chapter.

crossroads of communication between widely separated foreign civilizations. Certainly there, if anywhere in Palestine, could be found those "lost sheep of the house of Israel" to whom Jesus could bring his eager and joyous message of salvation.

It was natural that, being in Capernaum, Jesus should go to its synagogue on the very first Sabbath. It was equally according to custom that, being a teacher, he should be at once called upon publicly to expound the sacred word. The invitation was gladly accepted. It was Jesus' opportunity. Two classes of people were among those who heard him. There were, on the one hand, the Pharisees and Scribes who were the recognized religious and ecclesiastical leaders. In noticeable contrast to them were the common people, many of them from the lower classes, wayfarers, publicans, and social outcasts. Yet in the eyes of Jesus, and for the moment through the democracy of the synagogue, they were one company. A common need united them. All together they were a family of spiritually hungry people. As Jesus arose to speak they listened, first eagerly, then with astonishment. Here at last was a man whose words went forth with the power of a new and challenging authority. The result was two-fold. The first concerned the masses who were captivated by the strong yet gentle and gracious simplicity of his message. They heard and understood. To them Jesus' words were life. Jesus immediately perceived their attitude; it was the wholesome and eager response he had desired. Scrutinizing their faces before him, his attention was fixed upon a single individual. The unfortunate man was a moral outcast. An evil spirit, the symbol of moral degeneracy, had made him its victim. In a moment the man recognized the sympathy of Jesus and the divine power of his person. There was a terrifying cry, half remonstrance, half supplication, and then surrender. A changed and new man stood in the presence of the wondering crowd. He was healed and sane. From the moment he became an avowed follower of Jesus.

Jesus had begun his ministry as a preacher and teacher. Now, without premeditation or particular effort, he had suddenly become a healer, a wonder worker, a man of miracles. His fame traveled almost as a flash of lightning. Before the day ended

the crowds about him had became a multitude, and his healing and transforming hand had been laid upon all who sought his aid.

Jesus' day in the Capernaum synagogue had, however, another and quite opposite effect. It aroused the suspicion and the first active opposition of the Pharisees and Scribes. The unquestioned authority of the person and words of Jesus stirred in them a sense of alarm. Though apparently a rabbi, he did not confine himself to an expository teaching of the Mosaic law. The events of the Sabbath left them with strange misgivings and questionings among themselves concerning the outcome. For Jesus, too, the results of the day were of deep significance. His sudden fame as a divine healer brought him face to face with a new problem. It may have come with the subtle force of a temptation. Here, at the very beginning of his ministry, a humanitarian way presented itself that might lead directly to the realization of the Messianic goal. Yet, noble as these acts of mercy were in themselves, their emphasis would prove a hindrance to the paramount mission of Jesus as a religious teacher. The problem for Jesus did not involve a choice between two types of ministry. The sympathy with which he was bound to his suffering fellowmen made the giving of physical aid necessary. It was a question of the relative importance of man's bodily and spiritual needs. Jesus found its answer in the desert place, to which his desire to be alone and to spend the night in prayer, had driven him.[1] At daybreak his disciples found him resolute in his decision to leave Capernaum for an extended tour of teaching and preaching throughout Galilee.

Mark records that so great was the popularity of Jesus at this time that he was compelled to avoid the larger towns and cities in Galilee in order to be able to continue his chosen ministry of teaching; and that, even in the desert places to which he withdrew, the pursuing crowds pressed close upon him to hear his living word and to receive his life-giving touch. Thus days passed, many of them days of unrecorded deeds or events in the early Galilean ministry of Jesus. They were days of great

[1] Mark 1:35–39.

popularity and of joyous evangelistic activity. Capernaum, however, as before, remained the center of the missionary field thus far traversed and of the religious enthusiasm which everywhere manifested itself in behalf of Jesus' message.

II. RISING OPPOSITION

Upon his return to Capernaum Jesus faced a changed and now hostile Pharisaic opinion. The Jewish leaders openly questioned his right and power to heal men and to forgive sins.[1] The healing of the paralytic brought the opposition to a temporary crisis. It marked a transition stage in the Galilean ministry of Jesus. Thereafter his work took a new turn. Public preaching gradually gave place to private teaching. The open fields and the seaside took the place of the synagogue. The period which followed was characterized by the increasing enmity of the Jewish ecclesiastical leaders. The cause of their contention was Jesus' comparative disregard for the traditional customs and ceremonial institutions of Judaism. The accusation brought against him is definitely presented, in its historical setting, in the second chapter of Mark's Gospel. It was fourfold: (1) that Jesus presumed to have power to forgive sin; (2) that he freely and openly associated with publicans and sinners; (3) that he disregarded the Jewish law of ceremonial holiness; (4) that he flagrantly and repeatedly broke the Sabbath.

The Pharisees, moved to indignation, now prepared to take counsel with their own rival party, the Herodians, for an attack upon Jesus.[2] Their design was not only upon the teachings but upon the life of Jesus. They were ready to commit murder in defense of the ancient Mosaic law whose sixth commandment was: "Thou shalt not kill." Temporarily Jesus saw a guaranty of comparative safety for himself in the fact of an increased popular following. People from the South as far as Idumea, and from the North as far as Tyre and Sidon, came in throngs to visit the scene of the Galilean revival. They were

[1] Mark II:1–12.

[2] The Herodians at this time were the party of Herod Antipas. See Mark III:6.

not disappointed in Jesus, nor he in them. Nevertheless he knew that the enthusiasm of the masses was no proof of their permanent loyalty. Faithfulness, he realized, was the outgrowth, not of mere benefits received, but of a genuine and gradually growing capacity for self-sacrifice. Such capacity was the gift only of the few. From them he had chosen his disciples, who were to be with him continually, and who afterward were to be the bearers of his message to the world. It was apparent to Jesus that his mission among men could be only partly fulfilled during his lifetime upon earth. His time was short. Already the enemy was lurking in the dark waiting for the opportune moment to spring upon its prey. The truth, which was one day to illumine the whole world, could not be momentarily received. Its pure brightness was even now blinding the eyes of the Jewish religious leaders. Special training was necessary to prepare the Twelve for their future apostolic mission.[1]

Accordingly Mark records that Jesus gathered his disciples about him at a convenient place by the seaside where, from a fisherman's boat as a pulpit and in the presence of the listening multitudes upon the shore, he began in a special way to teach them the deep underlying truths of the kingdom of God. The scene of this incident is one of the most picturesque and prominent in the story of the life of Jesus. It marked an unforgettable day in the experience of the chosen Twelve. Thereafter they were no longer only followers, but disciples; they became learners or apprentices in the school of Christ, in preparation for the apostleship that awaited them in the future years. With this event Jesus himself entered upon a further stage in his public ministry. Thereafter he became more definitely the teacher, adopting the parable as the special agent for the impartation of his religious message.[2]

[1] The list of the twelve disciples, as given in Mark III:16–19, should be compared with those in Mtt. X:2–4, Lk. VI:14–16, and Acts 1:3. It will be noted that in all of the four lists the names of the five outstanding disciples are those of Simon Peter, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, and Andrew and Philip.

[2] Mark IV:1–34.

III. TEACHING IN PARABLES

The reasons for Jesus' choice of the parable are apparent. It was already in familiar use among the teachers of the East; it partook of all of the charm of a well told story; it offered rich illustrative material taken from the common experiences of life; it transformed profound spiritual truths into concrete living realities; it formed an imaginative link between the seen and the unseen; it was an effective and greatly needed aid to memory; it reached out beyond pure contemplation and suggested action. In short, the parable translated truth into life.

In the Gospel narrative the parables of Jesus are presented in three main groups.[1] The first of these finds its natural setting amid the incidents of the present transition period in Gospel history. The second belongs to the later Perean ministry of Jesus; the third is associated with the events and sacred memories of the passion week. The beginning of Jesus' teaching by parables probably followed shortly after the episode familiarly known as the Sermon on the Mount.[2] The notable collection of teachings recorded in Matthew V–VII forms the basis of the so-called kingdom discourses of Jesus which occupy an important place in the Gospel record.[3] It has preserved for us, in letters of gold, the noble religious and ethical truths which came at once to be regarded as fundamental to the Christian life. The mission of the parable was to aid in the interpretation and application of these truths.

In the parable of the soils [4] the Gospel writers have given us a vivid picture of the four types of hearers among the multitudes to whom Jesus has spoken. His word of truth is, by Jesus himself, likened to seed which a sower casts upon the ground.

[1] They are: (1) Mtt. XIII; (2) Luke XIII:22 to XVII:10; (3) Mtt. XXI:23 to XXV:46.

[2] Cf. Mtt. IV:25 with Mark III:7.

[3] It is to be noted here that the discourses which appear in Mtt. V–VII as the Sermon on the Mount are found, in Luke's Gospel, in rather widely separated portions throughout the narrative, and in their chosen historical setting.

[4] See Mark IV:1–20.

Some of it falls upon the hard road. This soil typifies the essentially pagan mind with its lack of capacity for the spiritual life. Other seeds drop on shallow ground, which is an apt representation of the mind of the masses that have come to hear the word of Jesus. They listen, and eagerly receive, and forthwith forget. Again other seed falls among the tares. The soil itself is of good quality; but it has already begun to produce its own crop. Before the truth will grow, falsehood and half-truth must first be plucked up. But the roots of old thoughts lie deep. The new Gospel message is sown and received, but it cannot grow. Here Jesus is speaking of those among his audience who are drawn to him by curiosity, but who are again led away as the enslaved victims of their own preoccupying interests. Finally there is the good soil. How it must have comforted Jesus to know that his word of life was not being utterly lost! And as he thought of the multipled generations of sowing and reaping, and, at last, of the great golden harvest, his soul was full of joy. If only a few of his teachings were taking root in the minds of men, he was satisfied. The future lay with God. There is no better summary of the extent and of the immediate result of Jesus' Galilean ministry than this masterly parable.

IV. A JOURNEY ACROSS THE LAKE

As time passed Jesus' method of teaching by parables produced certain positive and desirable effects. It gave him a more restricted and therefore a more select audience; it placed the popular demand for his spoken word upon a plane of equality with his ministry of healing; it encouraged people to weigh reasonably and to regard sympathetically the motives which Jesus in his life of complete service wished to have clearly revealed. He felt that if men were to know him and trust him, they must not only witness his deeds but hear his words. Only through them could he reveal himself and make known to men the Father's character and will. It was for this purpose that Jesus wished gradually more and more to avoid the thronging crowds, and instead to find a quiet place in the open country, or enter a ship which lay at anchor on the beautiful Lake of

Galilee, where he might find the companionship and speak the words which his heart desired. Twice, during this period of his ministry in Galilee, he sought a hard-earned retreat on the other side of the lake. Once it was in the region of the Gadarenes; later it was in the vicinity of Bethsaida Julias, in the territory of Philip, tetrarch of the Trachonitis.[1]

But the rest which he needed did not come. The reasons are found in the ensuing events graphically portrayed in the Gospel of Mark. Jesus is here represented as the master of the strenuous life.[2] The day has been one of multitudes and many parables. He calls for a boat and, when it is brought to where he is, he enters it "even as he is," without refreshment or food. Almost before the first fresh breeze of the lake has begun to swell its sails, Jesus is found lying in the ship's stern fast asleep. Then come the storm and the disciples' anxious cry. The rolling waves are filling the boat and it seems that in a moment the little craft, and all who are in it, will be swallowed up by the sea and the night. Jesus awakens. He allays their fears and stills the troubled waters. He is master indeed of both the sea and the soul.

The incidents which follow deepen the impression that Jesus' life was itself a miracle of self-sacrificial service. His sojourn in the country of the Gadarenes, the healing of the demoniac, the welcome return to Capernaum, and the wondrous scene in the home of Jairus do more than hold the reader's rapt attention; they offer opportunity for deep and unforgettable reflection concerning the power of Christ and the reality of the spiritual world. In the light of them the vision of heaven is no mere dream, and the hope of the soul is more real than the sight of human eyes.

V. EVANGELISM IN GALILEE

It appears from inferences in the Gospel of Mark that, after the miraculous raising of the daughter of Jairus, Jesus left Ca-

[1] Bethsaida Julias, at one time a poor village, was built by Philip into a beautiful little city in honor of Julia, the daughter of the emperor Augustus. See Mark V:5 and VI:45.

[2] Mark IV:35 to V:42.

pernaum for a journey southward along the shore of the lake to the little Galilean town of Magdala.[1] This village, according to Luke,[2] was apparently the home of a certain Pharisee by the name of Simon. During his brief visit Jesus received an invitation from Simon to dine in his house. Jesus accepted. The dinner, intended as an occasion to do the host honor, became a well announced event. The guests had arrived, and were reclining at the table when a woman appeared on the scene. She was an outcast, a woman of the street. Her name was Mary, thereafter known as the Magdalene. Her unbidden entrance into the house of a Pharisee, her penitent tears, her love; the horrified host, his disappointing look at Jesus, his suppressed anger; Jesus' sympathetic understanding, his acknowledgment of Mary's gift of love, his courteous though severe rebuke of Simon; the lesson of the incident, its vivid realism, its touch of domesticity—what elements taken from life itself for an artist's portraiture! None but a man of the genius of Luke could have seen what his eyes saw and written what his heart felt.[3]

From Magdala Jesus set out upon a brief tour of preaching throughout Galilee. On this journey he was accompanied not only by his twelve disciples but by a group of devout women to whom his ministry had been of special blessing. Mary Magdalene joined the group, and became, from that moment to the end of Jesus' life, his most devoted follower. How extensively Jesus visited the towns and villages of the region we do not know. Mark's Gospel record is here fragmentary, and the narratives of Matthew and Luke are all but silent. One event alone stands out clearly during this period; but that event is sufficient. None other is needed to interpret the definite experience through which Jesus passed at this time. It marked, indeed, a new and

[1] Beginning with this point in Mark's Gospel, i. e., Mk. VI:1, it is necessary to draw frequently from Mtt. and Lk. in order to complete the narrative. Read Mtt. IX:35 and Lk. VIII:1.

[2] Lk. VII:36 f.

[3] Who was Mary Magdalene? Is she to be identified with Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus? Many scholars are of this opinion, among them David Smith. See "In the Days of His Flesh," p. 202 f. Despite its difficulties, no view better accounts for the deep personal affection of Jesus for the little family group in Bethany, far from the scene of the greater part of his public ministry.

culminating epoch in his Galilean ministry. The period is best known as one of increasing bitter Jewish hostility. This opposition manifested itself in a three-fold way. There was first the disaffection of the popular multitudes who had come to be disappointed by Jesus' failure to fulfil their crude and material Messianic expectations. Then there was the growing hatred of the jealous and mistrusting Jewish religious authorities, the scribes and Pharisees. Finally, there were the treacherous suspicions of Herod and of the Herodian party. Wherever Jesus went he was listened to with the old time eagerness, which now, however, was mingled with manifest reasoning caution. The first period of spontaneous and complete abandonment to the winsome gospel appeal was passed. Open hunger for the truth had begun to give way to searching criticism; the ready heart was being supplanted by the questioning mind. Christianity, scarcely yet born, was in danger of becoming intellectual.

Saddened, though probably in no way surprised by this changing attitude, Jesus came to Nazareth. He was in his home town. On the Sabbath day he entered the synagogue and accepted the invitation to teach. The lesson for the day was a familiar but extraordinary passage in Old Testament prophecy.[1] He read:

> "The spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because he anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor;
> He hath sent mé to heal the broken-hearted,
> To preach deliverance to the captives,
> And recovering of sight to the blind,
> To set at liberty them that are bruised,
> To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

There was a peculiar appropriateness about this scriptural theme which exactly fitted the occasion. The words, as Jesus uttered them, seemed to come, not from the sacred page, but from the great deep of his own soul. The people listened breathlessly. They were utterly captivated by his kind and gracious message. Presently, however, they fell into secret questionings among themselves regarding Jesus. Was he not the son of Joseph, the

[1] See Luke IV:16–10, and cf. Isaiah LXI:1–2.

humble carpenter? And did they not know his brothers? Whence all this untaught wisdom? Whence, too, his reputed power to perform miracles? Would he choose to honor Nazareth, his home town, by an example of its display? Jesus was quick to perceive the motive of these bald inquiries. Accordingly, instead of satisfying their curiosity, he discoursed to them upon the question of God's interest in the Gentile world. Instantly their enthusiasm turned to bitterness and wrath. They rose and, laying hands upon Jesus, thrust him out of the synagogue. Their first impulse was then and there to kill him. But overawed by the power of his divine personality and influenced, no doubt, by his personal friends, the leaders of the crowd dared do him no violence.

Jesus left Nazareth in undisguised amazement. He marvelled, Mark tells us, at the community's unbelief. He had come unto his own and they had rejected him. The door of his own house had been closed against him. What if it should come to be thus with his work in all Galilee? As he turned again to go to other villages to teach the truths for which he had been rejected in Nazareth, he did so with the clear conviction of a gradually impending crisis. The opposition which he had anticipated, and which he had attempted earnestly to avoid, had come to be irreconcilable. This rising expression of enmity filled him with profound sorrow. He was grieved at the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees. Most of all, his heart went out in pity toward the erring, yet groping multitudes who so eagerly looked to these blind leaders as their spiritual guides. The people seemed to him to be as sheep scattered and driven and without a true shepherd.

Jesus' compassion for the misled multitudes prompted him to a new resolve. The time had come when he could no longer alone carry the burden of the new gospel evangelism. Others, particularly those nearest and best prepared, must share it with him. The consequence of this plan was two-fold. It came first in the form of a solemn appeal to prayer. "The harvest indeed is plenteous," he said one day to his disciples as they were walking together through the ripening fields of grain that bordered the pathway from one village to another, "but the

laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth reapers into the harvest." [1] The invitation to prayer was followed by a call to service. Wholeheartedly the Twelve responded. Receiving their commission at the hands of Jesus himself, they set out upon what was to become the first missionary enterprise in the history of Christianity. The character of their ministry was three-fold: they preached and taught the message of the kingdom; they exercised power and authority over the demons of moral evil; they healed the sick.[2]

VI. A THREATENING CRISIS

While thus alone for a little while, Jesus received the sad news of the death of John the Baptist. The report of it was brought to him by a messenger or friend who had an unusual story to tell concerning the circumstances which were just then arousing the interest of Herod in Jesus' Galilean ministry. It was the tragic story of a king's disgrace and a prophet's heroism and death. The hero was John, and the murderer was Antipas, then tetrarch of Galilee and Perea.[3] John had been, indeed, a great man. Nobler, even than his courage in the face of Herod, had been his humility in the presence of Jesus.[4] In him might and meekness had dwelt together and wrought a great character. Faith, too, had had a part in the achievement of his moral greatness. It had been a faith tested by doubt.[5] Life for John had been a struggle with strong spiritual temptations. Jesus, who himself suffered similarly, understood even the ministry of doubt in the development of a human soul. His tribute to John as a man and a prophet clearly reveals his attitude in regard to the relation of faith to character.

John's death brought Jesus more than personal sorrow. It

[1] Mtt. IX:37–38.

[2] Mark VI:12–13.

[3] Mark VI:14–29. Herodias, Herod's unlawful wife, had been taken by him from his brother Philip whose residence was in Rome. Salome, the daughter of Herodias, later married Philip, tetrarch of the Trachonitis.

[4] Mk. I:7–8.

[5] Luke VII:18–35.

brought temporary discouragement. Another prophet's voice had been stilled. Palestine, the bearer of the world's supreme revelation of spiritual truth, was not yet itself able to endure the light of its own religious teachings. The Messianic age, scarcely yet begun, was already endangered by the activity of its foes. This time, however, it was not the Jews themselves who voiced the opposition, but a representative of the Roman government. The tragic event presaged ill for Jesus' own future work in Galilee. Was it the sign of the gathering of dark clouds for a fierce storm of persecution? It is evident that Jesus fully contemplated the seriousness of the situation for himself and for the work which lay so closely upon his heart. When the disciples returned from their tour of evangelism they found him in Capernaum sad and weary and in need of rest. Why did he not wish to remain in the village among his friends long enough to listen to the enthusiastic missionary report of the Twelve? Was it because his popularity had reached a crisis that had resulted in a movement or plot forcibly to make Jesus the Messianic king? [1] Did he, for this reason, wish to evade an order to appear before Antipas, who, at the moment, was conscience-stricken over the death of John, but, upon discovering the identity of Jesus, might endeavor to lay hands upon him also? [2] Such seems indeed to be the inference. For we gather from the threads of the Gospel narrative that, accompanied by the disciples, he entered a boat which was directed toward Bethsaida Julias on the northeastern shore of the Galilean lake. Here, in the territory of Philip, Jesus hoped to find both rest and freedom from molestation. However, while the messengers whom Antipas may have sent did not follow him out of Galilee, the multitude did. The locality so well adapted to Jesus' need of a quiet retreat became the scene of a great gathering. The crowd numbered into the thousands. The people had come to be with him, to hear his words, and to declare their loyalty to him. They too were weary from the long journey. Jesus saw that

[1] See John VI:15.

[2] Herod had been led to believe that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead. See Mark VI:14.

they were one with him in the great quest to which life had called them. Instantly his weariness was forgotten. In his compassion he gave them bread to eat and food for their hungry souls. They returned satisfied, while he himself sought the rest and strength which he could find alone in prayer.[1] The disciples returned to the boat in order to set sail for the western shore of the lake. Jesus withdrew to the adjacent hills. All the night through he walked and talked with God. No wonder that, as dawn appeared, the disciples, having grappled almost the whole night with a contrary wind, seeing him come to them walking calmly on the troubled water, mistook him for a spirit. Prayer, which was for Jesus the most vital form of spiritual experience, had transfigured and transformed him before their eyes. The impression which this incident made upon them remained ineffaceable throughout the later years. Mark, probably here quoting Peter himself, tells us that thereafter Jesus never again seemed to them to be quite the same person. What they saw him to be in the gray dawn of that memorable morning caused them, for a time at least, to wonder, to be "sore amazed in themselves, beyond measure."

VII. THE TEST OF DISCIPLESHIP

The solemn mystery which invested the person of Jesus was evident only to those who lived with him most intimately, to those who knew him best. The multitudes regarded him with unchanged familiarity. They were moved by what they beheld outwardly, or too often merely by the individual and temporal benefits which his compassionate ministry bestowed upon them. Yet even they, for reasons they could not themselves discern, clung to him, followed him, sacrificed for him, worshiped him. It was, indeed, at this time, following his return to Galilee from Bethsaida beyond Jordan, that the popularity of Jesus reached its great climax.[2]

[1] See Mark VI:45–52.

[2] See Mark VI:55–56. Note the excitement which prevailed at the time of Jesus' return. Everywhere, in the villages, the cities, and the open country, the multitudes hastened to come to him with their sick.

But the spirit of opposition reached its climax also. It was, according to the Gospel record, now no longer confined to the region of Galilee.[1] The Jerusalem Sanhedrin, exercising jurisdiction over all religious matters in the adopted Jewish province of Galilee, itself intervened. A delegation was ordered to make a journey to the North and officially to interview Jesus. The arrival of this Jewish commission composed of leading scribes and Pharisees was regarded by Jesus as the sign of an impending crisis.[2] The hostility against him had become deep-seated; it was widespread; henceforth it was, in addition, to be aggressive. Jerusalem had never dealt gently with its greatest prophets. These emissaries from the Judean capital had not come to learn but to condemn. They expected from him a sincerity which they made no effort to apply to themselves. They solemnly looked upon themselves as the appointed guardians of the Mosaic law. Their interests in religion were ceremonial. Ritual dominated their daily thinking and life. They were past masters in the art of formal piety. To Jesus, on the other hand, religious ceremonialism, as demanded by the priestly law, was meaningless if not repulsive. It was an evil grounded in superstition, or based on a gross misconception of spiritual values. When the Pharisees accused him of disloyalty to the faith of the fathers, he reasoned with them concerning moral righteousness and the kingdom of God. When they condemned him as a false aspirant for the honors of the Hebrew Messiahship, he answered them briefly and incisively with the discourse centering in two strong and indicting words: Ye hypocrites.

With the lines thus drawn for and against Jesus, his followers faced for the first time the questioning challenge of true discipleship. The time had come when mere interest in Jesus or popular enthusiasm in his behalf did not suffice. The call was for loyalty. But such loyalty must have a cause; it must rest upon sound convictions; it must be the result of a compelling decision. Jesus realized that many who had hitherto been his friends had come to the parting of the ways. What would be

[1] Mark VII:1.

[2] Here cf. Mark VII with John VI.

the outcome of the sifting process which was to separate the chaff from the wheat? Would he hereafter stand alone, be forsaken; or could he count on men and women who would be loyal because they loved, even if that loyalty meant self-sacrifice, perhaps unto death? As for himself, he knew by now that the path which he must tread was the path of suffering. What the final outcome would be he could not yet discern. Only the future could reveal the price he was to pay for his Messianic gift. The cross which loomed on the Judean hill was still hidden in the distance; but its first faint shadows had already begun to fall upon his heart and soul. Meanwhile he must walk by faith. His life and work were in God's hands. The kingdom of God was a reality, but it was also an adventure. Discipleship, too, must be based, not upon a merely popular hope but upon an adventure in trust. It must become a fellowship in suffering. His disciples, he said—speaking in the words of a parable—must eat his flesh and drink his blood.[1] Those who listened to Jesus' interpretation of his Messiahship found it indeed a hard saying.[2] It led to open offense and was followed by widespread apostasy. Even the Twelve declared themselves shocked by the severity of the challenge. They, too, had come to a turning point in their lives. Yet there was no alternative but to follow. They had put their hands to the plow and there was now no turning back; they must plow the furrow through. Love for Jesus and faith in him had made them his devoted and unreservedly obedient subjects.

[1] John VI:51–59.
[2] John VI:60.

CHAPTER XXII

THE BORDER MINISTRY

THE crisis which Jesus faced during his final sojourn in Galilee did not culminate disastrously. It was averted by his decision to transfer the scene of his future ministry to the territories adjacent to the Galilean province. The events of recent days had pointed toward the settlement of three important issues. The first was the gradual disillusionment of the popular mind regarding Jesus' Messiahship; the second was the established assurance, for a time at least, of the sincere and stanch loyalty of the inner group of his disciples; the third was concerned with the now firmly fixed and irreconcilable hostility of the Jewish leaders. Jesus himself emerged from the significant experiences of these days with a two-fold resolve: the one was to prepare himself for the suffering and sorrow which, in all probability, awaited him in the future; the other was to give himself henceforth more completely to the intimate companionship and the particular training of the especially chosen Twelve. He accordingly sought a place of retreat where he might accomplish this purpose.

I. JOURNEYINGS ABOUT GALILEE

Hitherto he had gone to some locality on the east shore of the lake; this time he directed his footsteps toward the borders of the Phœnician cities of Tyre and Sidon.[1] Here on Gentile soil he hoped he might find time for both rest and meditation.

[1] The Phœnicians, during the years prior to their conquest by Rome, had established themselves not only in Syria but in Northern Africa. In N. T. times those in North Africa became known as Liby-Phœnicians, those in northern Palestine as Syro-Phœnicians.

His fame, however, had gone before him and "he could not be hid." Human anguish and need were appallingly present everywhere, and they were always sure to reach the heart of Jesus. The compassion of Jesus was the sign of his greatness; it marked him in character and in person as divine. Only God Himself could love with such tenderness and self-sacrifice. It was in the pure and transparent depth of his sympathy for down-trodden and suffering men that the people of his own time recognized a virtue and supernatural power which could be interpreted only by regarding it as a revelation of the nature and character of God. Love as represented in the religion and life of Jesus knew no boundaries of region or race. In length and breadth it was universal; in depth eternal. From it, as Paul was later to learn, sprang both faith and hope: faith in a redeemed world; hope of individual and personal immortality.

Syro-Phœnicia, of a Greek-Semitic population, half pagan and half heathen, offered a new and particularly needy field. An urgent question confronted Jesus: Should he enter? To do so might mean the beginning of a new and Gentile period in his public ministry. His decision to remain a prophet in Israel was not the result of a selfish ideal and narrow vision; it was demanded by the time and circumstances of his work. His response to the urgent appeal of the Syro-Phœnician woman revealed how impossible it was for Jesus deliberately to turn away from the sincere cry of human need. He wished, by his gentle refusal of the Gentile invitation, to avoid new and repeated beginnings. The soil in Palestine had already been prepared; the seed had been sown; and the time for the harvest was short. He must therefore return to more familiar territory; he must work toward a definite goal; he must accomplish his purposed task.

There was, moreover, another reason for the decision of Jesus not at this time to enter the Gentile field. He did not wish to break faith with his own people. They were deserving of a larger opportunity to hear the gospel message than his life work had hitherto afforded. He believed in the essential preparedness of the Hebrew race for the task of becoming the bearers of religious truth to the Gentile world. Ultimately, in the Father's

own time, through those who were already his disciples, he would draw people from all races and nations unto himself. Meanwhile there was need of time for prolonged and intensive training in order that his followers might be fitted for their appointed task. Whatever the inference to be drawn from the gospel writer's account of this single incident in Jesus' Phœnician ministry, two truths are here revealed which are of enduring significance: (1) faith and prayer are God's gifts to universal mankind; (2) wherever, in all lands and among all peoples, there is sorrow and pain without the loss of faith, there Christ himself is present, both in his fellowship of suffering and in his power to heal.

Leaving the borders of Tyre and Sidon Jesus and his disciples journeyed eastward above Galilee, across the Orontes and the lower Lebanon mountains, until they came to the slopes of Mt. Hermon whose perpetual snows fed the sources of the Jordan. From there, in all probability without entering the city of Cæsarea Philippi which lay contiguous to their route, they directed their course southward passing along the Jordan near Bethsaida Julias, and thence around the eastern shore of the Lake of Galilee, until they came to the region of the Decapolis. The territory was in part already familiar to Jesus. Once before, at the close of his early Galilean ministry, he had sought rest and quiet there. He had gone as far as Gadara where, after the healing of the demoniac, the Gadarenes, in their superstition and fear, had anxiously besought him to leave their borders. Here, it was hoped, Jesus and the disciple group would find at last a solitary place of retreat. But here, too, human need found him and made its demand upon him. Why Mark, in his account of this brief period of retirement, recorded only the single miracle of the healing of the deaf man,[1] we can only conjecture. Jesus' sojourn of three days among these people must have been accompanied by many such acts of mercy. Perhaps this single instance of the poor deaf stammerer, more than any other, impressed itself upon the minds of the disciples as somehow typical of the great Gentile world, whose incoherent attempts at spirit-

[1] Mark VII:31–37.

ual self-expression and morbid dullness of heart needed the awakening and life-giving touch of Jesus. We have the word of the evangelist that the multitudes that gathered about Jesus in this Gentile territory made an unusual impression upon him. Some of them had, it appears, followed him all the distance on the journey from Phœnicia. The sincere and deep soul hunger, which had, for three days, caused these men and women to disregard the common desire for food, must have reminded him of the period of his own first great temptation from which he had emerged with the triumphant conviction that man does not live by bread alone.[1] Yet here again appreciation and pity moved him to help them. By giving them bread to eat he could fittingly point them to himself as the spiritual bread of life. The feeding of the four thousand which took place on the lower eastern border of the Galilean lake, like that which had previously occurred at Bethsaida on the Jordan,[2] was a dramatized parable. Instead of being spoken as was, for example, the parable of the sower,[3] it was symbolically and publicly enacted. Its lesson was thus made unmistakably clear.[4]

The border ministry of Jesus, also sometimes called the period of wanderings, now began gradually to draw to its close. Three places were yet to be visited on the journey which was to lead to the great Galilean crisis.[5] The first of these was in the vicinity of an obscure village known by the beautiful name Dalmanutha. Matthew refers to the locality as the region of Magadan. It may possibly be identified with the modern town of Ed Delhemiyeh situated a mile north of the point where the Yarmuk river flows into the Jordan. The most convenient means of travel to this place was by way of boat from the eastern to the southern shore of the lake, and from there by land to the secluded little

[1] Mark VIII:2.

[2] See Mark VI:35–44.

[3] Mark IV:3–9.

[4] Though possible, it is not necessary to regard the two accounts in Mark's Gospel as varying versions of the same incident. The differences of historical background lend additional interest to the narratives. The circumstances of the first were those of Jewish life; those of the second of life among the Gentiles.

[5] I. e., the Transfiguration, which definitely closed the period of Jesus' ministry in the general Galilean territory.

village. The arrival there of Jesus and his disciples may presumably have been followed by a brief period of solitude and rest. If so, hours of meditation and teaching filled up the well-earned days of quiet.

For a little while, accordingly, Jesus was free to teach and to pray unmolested. Then again followed opposition. As usual, it came from the Pharisees. However, they were this time accompanied, not by the scribes, but by their much hated ecclesiastical rivals the Sadducees. The delegation had probably come from Capernaum. Assisted by the Herodians, they were now plotting definitely to establish a criminal charge against Jesus. Their plan was probably to involve him in a controversy whereby he might lose favor with the people. Jesus was quick to perceive their evil intent. He knew how to be sympathetic even toward his enemies, but bigotry, allied with insincerity, found him its outspoken foe. The demand of the Pharisees was peremptory; it was for an immediate and notable sign from heaven as the proof of his Messiahship. They were in no mood to believe; their words were flung at Jesus as a challenge. For a moment, it seems, he faced the temptation of its acceptance.[1] Perhaps the thought suggested itself to him that a timely display of his miraculous power would then and forever, both for others and for himself, settle the question of his divine character and mission among men. If such a desire tempted Jesus it was soon overcome. Indignation melted into pity and grief for the cause of the kingdom which was made to suffer so great an injustice at the hands of the self-appointed leaders of religion. He "groaned in his spirit" at the tragic misapprehension of his purpose and mission by both the priests and the people. Accordingly he refused the sign asked of him, bade his inquisitors farewell, and accompanied by the disciples returned to the shore of the lake. The boat lay waiting and the little company embarked and set sail toward the northern side. The journey by water was short. It was followed by a brief sojourn at Bethsaida Julias, and, a little later, by two days of leisurely travel by land along the east side of the upper Jordan to Cæsarea Philippi.

[1] See Mark VIII:11.

The events which accompanied this journey, and which came to a final climax in the transfiguration of Jesus, were few; but they were of marked significance. The Gospel writers especially mention three: (1) Jesus' discourse of warning against the deadening influences of Pharisaism; (2) his healing of the blind man; and (3) the disciples' confession of his Messiahship. These events, considered carefully, were seen to have a distinctly interpretative bearing upon the culminating trend of Jesus' public ministry. They typified three definite attitudes among those who had thus far heard his message. The first of them was religious formalism which was becoming increasingly intolerant and barren; the second was the popular mind that very slowly but hopefully was groping its way from spiritual darkness to light; the third was the steadily growing power of spiritual comprehension and of moral character manifested in the lives of the faithful disciples.

When Jesus said to the Twelve: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," they supposed that, while on the way across the lake, he had been concerned with their supply of daily bread. When later, at Bethsaida, he opened the eyes of the blind man, they realized that the power to see, and therefore to understand, comes only through the continued exercise of faith. Finally, at the crucial hour of their discipleship, when Jesus confronted them with the question, "Who do men say that I am?", time had prepared them for the reply which before long was to become the great confession of the Christian church, and which since then has become the adopted creed of more than half the civilized world.[1] The consciousness of Jesus' divine sonship came to the disciples as the result of a prolonged period of personal observation. It was the product of their cumulative spiritual experience. It was both an index and a tribute to their own religious growth.

Jesus now found himself face to face with the great crisis of his public ministry. His work in northern Palestine was about to come to its close. It had, generally speaking, been both joyful and fruitful. The popular demonstration in his behalf had

[1] Mark VIII:29. Cf. Matthew XVI:13–17 and Luke IX:18–22.

been an unmistakable sign of his successful leadership. The acceptance of his challenge to membership in the new spiritual kingdom had not been universal; but it had been encouraging. The opposition, too, had increased; but it had added to rather than detracted from his power and his fame. The faithfulness of his immediate followers had been deeply gratifying. Most encouraging of all had been Peter's noble confession and its corroboration by the Twelve. The work he had been called to do had been so difficult, the temptations so subtle and severe, and the path so lonely that he had expected to be misunderstood. He knew that he would be deserted and even persecuted. How consoling, therefore, to find true friends and teachable disciples among those to whom he had so unreservedly given himself. Here was the assurance, at last, that his mission was not in vain. He himself might die, but his work would not perish. It might, indeed, in his death find a new significance and meaning. The lesson of love could be taught only through complete self-sacrifice. What if a future day should demand of him the supreme gift of his life for his love unto the uttermost? He had long since anticipated that the way he had chosen would end in humiliation and suffering. Yet he had neither questioned nor faltered. He had come to reveal the Father's purpose and to do His will. Nothing else had mattered, and it could not matter now. To be loyal to God was for Jesus only to follow his own nature. The deep impulses of his whole being tended toward God to Whom he felt himself drawn in the ennobling and sacred experience of vicarious suffering.

II. THE GREAT CRISIS

The course of events, toward which this high resolve was leading Jesus, now became increasingly plain. With his mission in and about Galilee accomplished, he must go to Judea and to Jerusalem. There, instead of the eagerly listening and approving multitudes, he would meet the organized forces of hierarchical religion. Jerusalem was the stronghold of religious orthodoxy. Rabbinical legalism was in power and was responsible for the

prevailing social and moral order. In addition there were the priests, not popular either with the Pharisees or with the people but feared for their influence and their aristocratic culture. Prophets, who were men of strong convictions and marked individuality, were seldom long tolerated within this ecclesiastical citadel. Many of them, though they had lighted the torch of Messianism and had kept it burning with the intense fires of their hope and faith, had been silenced on its streets. Others of more heroic mold had paid for their freedom of prophetic utterance with the price of their own life blood. Jerusalem was no safe city for a prophet such as Jesus was. Yet he could not shrink from the danger that awaited him there. Even death must not be permitted to be an obstacle on the path of duty. But for such an undertaking great courage was needed, and time for preparation, both for himself and for the trusting yet not fully understanding disciples.

For this reason Jesus chose to go at once to a more distant place of retirement. Accompanied by the Twelve, he directed his footsteps toward Cæsarea Philippi situated at the base of the majestic and snowy Mt. Hermon. While on the way he broke the news of his decision to the leaders among the disciples. He had come naturally and almost daily to look to them for comfort. Peter loved Jesus. His words of remonstrance came from an impulsive but pitying and devoted heart.[1] Jesus was not offended by these words; he was tempted by them. For Jesus, too, loved Peter. The challenging call to discipleship that followed must surely have caused all who heard it to marvel.[2] What a strange philosophy there was in this message of the cross! The paradox of finding life by giving it, or of losing life by attempting to save it, came from the lips of Jesus as a chapter from his own experience. Its gift to the world is, in epitome, the gift of Jesus' own biography. It forms the basis of the entire creed of Christianity.

[1] Mark VIII:31–33.

[2] Mark VIII:34–38. These words, according to Mark, were spoken to the following crowd as well as to the Twelve. They must have caused many to wonder and to turn back and retrace their footsteps toward Galilee.

Jesus' journey to the mount of the transfiguration was made with the companionship of the select three of his disciples. Its purpose was to prepare Jesus for his coming death upon the cross. He had previously discovered and clearly discerned his duty. Grace and strength from Heaven were now needed to reconcile him to it. Luke tells us that in taking this step Jesus again yielded to his irresistible urge to prayer.[1] The scene that ensued was hidden in the indescribable glory and mystery of spiritual experience. It was not intended for human eyes, but for souls laid bare in the presence of God. For this reason, according to the sacred story, a cloud overshadowed Jesus, enveloping the radiance of his angelic person in the holy mystery of a complete and ineffable communion with God. The event made an unforgettable impression upon the three disciples. While Jesus had prayed they had slept. Perhaps it was morning when they awakened. The glory they beheld and the voice they heard were unearthly. The experience that had become theirs was incommunicable; they could tell no one of it.

To Jesus the transfiguration was a period of great spiritual significance. He came down from the mountain not only prepared for martyrdom but assured of his divine Messiahship and therefore of the meaning which his death would ultimately convey. He knew that he had been chosen of God for a holy mission of suffering, in order that, through it, men might henceforth come to understand the price which love must pay for the fulfilment of its divine dream or ideal of a redeemed humanity. It was, he realized, the price that God Himself must pay in revealing His love to His human children. Love must suffer, else there is no hope for the world.

The final scene of Jesus' ministry in northern Palestine centered near the village of Capernaum. It was the place where his work had begun. Probably about two years had passed since that time. They had been rich and crowded years of preaching, of healing, of teaching, and of intimate companionship with his

[1] Cf. Mark IX, Luke IX, and Matthew XVII. Note the interesting differences and similarities in the accounts. None of Luke's inimitable portraits from the life of Jesus exceeds this one in its transcendent beauty and significance.

disciples and friends. Capernaum was full of memories for Jesus. He had now come to bid the town and its kindly people farewell. Mark closes his account of these last Galilean days with a picture of vivid and strong contrasts.[1] In the background is Jesus' announcement of the consummation of his Messianic mission. The details themselves are clear: the betrayal, the arrest, the martyrdom and, most important of all, the resurrection are clearly foretold events.[2] The portrait of Jesus presents him as under the constraint of a solemn and mighty spiritual impulse. He has steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. There is a mission he must fulfil, and he is straitened until it be accomplished. He is a figure of humble yet stately self-sacrifice, wonderful in his heroism, his compassion, and his Messianic fervor. The disciples, on the other hand, though his companions, are not prepared to share his thoughts. An unsuccessful attempt at performing a miracle reveals their weakness; their dispute, as to who among themselves is the greatest, betrays their selfishness; their jealousy, of one who, though not a disciple of Jesus, is stronger in working wonders than they, is nothing short of an offense against Jesus' ideals of the new kingdom. The contrast calls for new and radical decisions. There must be a choice between alternatives; half-time and half-hearted loyalties will henceforth not be sufficient. Followers of Jesus must have combined in one character the faith and humility of the child and self-denying heroism of the soldier.

It is not difficult to imagine how the disciples received these challenging words of Jesus. They could not quite comprehend either him or them. They perceived nevertheless that he thoroughly understood and knew them. He discovered not only the hidden truth of their common speech, but the very motives of their hearts. They stood in awe of him and of the solemn charge he now committed to them. How apparent to themselves were now their personal ambition and foolish pride, by means of which they were shutting themselves out of the Kingdom and

[1] Mark IX:14–50. Chapter IX represents, in Mark's Gospel, the close of Jesus' northern ministry.

[2] See Mark IX:31.

closing the door to intimate companionship with Jesus! If the kingdom of God was open to those who could receive it as little children, there was much for them to unlearn, and much to learn. The motive for loyalty must be shifted from ambition to trust; life must be accepted on daily confidence and faith; service must be lifted from the lower plane of formal duty to the higher realm of love.

III. ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM

With the great crisis definitely behind him, Jesus entered upon a new stage in his public ministry. It was a period of teaching chiefly through the parable. It began, as Luke tells us, with Jesus' decision to go to Jerusalem.[1] The exact route which he followed is somewhat difficult to determine. It is clear from the account that he wished to travel through Samaria, but that, by reason of the general hostility which existed between the Samaritans and the Jews, he was not welcomed. Though this refusal of a passport into the Samaritan territory offended the disciples, it only mildly influenced the thought of Jesus. It seemed to him but prophetic of the open hostility which awaited him at his entrance into the Jewish capital. It is very probable that, upon arriving at the Samaritan border, the journeying company crossed the Jordan by the way of the caravan road which led from the Gentile city of Scythopolis eastward into the territory of the Decapolis, and from there continued on its way southward along the east bank of the Jordan into Perea.[2]

The incidents of this eventful journey toward Jerusalem are most fully related in the Gospel of Luke. It is noteworthy that while Mark gives but one chapter to the Perean period of Jesus' ministry, Luke gives it nearly ten chapters in his more elaborate and carefully written narrative.[3] His dependence upon

[1] Luke IX:51.

[2] At the close of Jesus' sojourn in Perea he recrossed the Jordan at Jericho and, from there, went up to Jerusalem. See Wade's N. T. History, p. 425.

[3] Cf. Mark X with Luke IX:51–XVIII:43. This larger section of Luke is familiarly known as the Greater Interpolation; also as St. Luke's Travel Document, because of

Mark's Gospel in these chapters is slight. The emphasis in them is everywhere upon the teaching activity of Jesus. The central theme of Jesus' message is the Kingdom; his special method of instruction is the parable.[1] Not all of the parables in these ten chapters belong to the Perean period. The majority of them, however, find in the circumstances and natural surroundings of Jesus' life in this beautiful east-Jordan territory their appropriate historical setting.

During his journey through Perea two thoughts were uppermost in Jesus' mind. The first, as has been noted, concerned the kingdom; the second revolved about the approaching days of the cross. In the meaning of these two words, the kingdom and the cross, Jesus saw the fulfilment of his entire earthly mission. As yet, to most of those who heard them, they were a profound mystery, half hidden and half revealed by the symbolism of the parable. Soon, however, they were to be made clear through Jesus' own self-surrender and sacrificial death. The time indeed for the enactment of this supreme parable of human redemption was not far off. Jesus felt that he must do the work for which God had sent him into the world; and he must do it while the day lasted, for the night was close at hand. This supreme work was to reveal to his disciples, and through them to mankind, the sovereign power, the good-will, and the loving, sacrificial character of God. God as the universal Father, as suffering, forgiving and redeeming Love; Jesus himself as the true interpreter and representative of this love to men; and finally a world of reborn hope, of transformed moral character, of renewed and living faith, and vitally conscious of its own spiritual and eternal destiny—this was the sublime conception, to the realization of which he was consecrating and giving his life.

Meanwhile the preparation of the disciples required his most

its frequent references to Jesus' journey from Galilee to Judea. Luke VI:20–VIII:3 is by comparison known as the Lesser Interpolation.

[1] The parables found in Luke IX–XIX, together with (1) other parables and sermon extracts from Luke VI:20–VIII:3, and (2) Matthew V–VII and Matthew XII–XIII, and the stories in Matthew and Luke which surround the birth, the youth, and the resurrection of Jesus, represent the important additions in Luke and Matthew to the narrative of Mark.

patient and active attention. Following here again Mark's account,[1] we note that Jesus kept the attention of the Twelve closely fixed upon the question of true discipleship. He placed the emphasis first upon its cost, then upon its rewards, after that upon its adventures and anticipations, later still upon its ranks and degrees, and finally upon the genuinely humanitarian service by which it should be characterized. All the discourses and miracles of Jesus now became subject to a directly educative purpose. When, for example, the Pharisees came to him with previously prepared arguments in connection with the question of divorce, he answered them with a discourse on the deep and abiding sacredness of marriage.[2] Again, when the Perean mothers brought their children to Jesus to receive his blessing, he silenced the well-meaning but unjustified rebuke of the disciples by making these little ones the symbol or patterns of that moral purity and perfect trust without which none may enter the kingdom of Heaven. So, too, when the rich young ruler, coming to Jesus and calling him good Master, inquired of him concerning the way of eternal life, the answer that came from the lips of Jesus was meant for all who might hear: "Go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me."

With the journey through Perea ended, Jesus and his followers crossed into Judea by a ford of the lower Jordan and entered the ancient city of Jericho. Here he found himself at last on sacred Jewish soil. Jericho was a tropical city; lying in the Jordan valley, which at this point is about fourteen miles wide and more than one thousand feet below sea-level, it was a center of great wealth. In Jesus' own time, it was the second city in importance in the province of Judea. It was an unusually important point on the caravan highways which connected Egypt with Damascus and Mesopotamia. From its vicinity,

[1] Mark X. Cf. also Matthew XIX.

[2] In this question of divorce Jesus was asked to decide between the opinions of two leading schools of rabbis. The school of Hillel granted the right of divorce for almost any cause; that of Shammai forbade it under all circumstances except for adultery.

amid the fertility of an irrigated and well populated plain, the traveler could, on a clear day, look northward and see the distant snowy slopes of Hermon; he could look westward and discern, in outline among the Judean hills, the capital and sacred city of Jerusalem. As Jesus stood within Jericho, with his face lifted toward these mountains, he realized that, like Joshua of ancient times, whose own name he bore, he was on the threshold of a crucial and solemn enterprise. Jerusalem, with its historical associations, its temple and its priests, its rabbis and its law, was the very stronghold of the traditional Jewish faith. His own fame and the report of his message which had preceded him to Judea had already marked him, in the eyes of the Jewish leaders, as a revolutionary and therefore undesirable prophet. Now, taking his life in his own hands, he was going up even into the very camp of his enemies. He knew the danger; he had been warned and, for a time, he had shrunk from its fateful consequences. He had however already counted the cost, and was prepared to pay the price which his love for humanity and his assurance of its spiritual and universal redemption demanded. For, after all, his life was not in his own hands. He had from the beginning sought to do the Father's will, and he was now but carrying his resolve to its final consummation. His experience had taught him that love, to be fully victorious and to come to complete self-realization, must meet and vanquish death. It must meet the supreme test; it must be given its supreme opportunity. Now that the cross lifted itself clearly before him, his soul reached out toward it in full and ready acceptance. To offer himself in death as he had already given himself in life, was the best that he could do. Therefore, with full possession of his powers and conscious as never before of his mission, he undertook to prepare himself for this last great offering. His departure from Jericho for Jerusalem, accordingly, marked the beginning of the final period in the earthly life of Jesus.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE JUDEAN MINISTRY

THE public activity of Jesus was now fast nearing its end. Behind him, in memory, lay Galilee, with its joyous days of gospel teaching and service in the kingdom of God; before him stood Jerusalem, with its hostility, its sorrowing disappointment, and its cross. For what he had accomplished in the past he had been given months and even years of time. What lay ahead, even for the full consummation of its divine purpose, was about to be crowded and pressed into the tragic days of one week. Though the Gospel chronology of the greater part of the Synoptic narrative presents varied difficulties, the events of this week culminating in Jesus' passion and resurrection are clearly outlined.[1] Taken in their indicated order, they group themselves, according to days, as follows: Sunday, the day of the triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem; Monday, the day of Jesus' self-presentation in the temple; Tuesday, the day of controversy with the orthodox Jewish leaders; Wednesday, the day of quiet retirement in Bethany; Thursday, the day of intimate companionship with the disciples; Friday, the day of suffering in Gethsemane, at the trial, and on the cross; Saturday, the day of the sealed sepulcher; Sunday, the day of the resurrection and the first Easter.

I. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

The road from Jericho to Jerusalem is rough and steep. The distance is about fifteen miles, in the course of which there is an ascent of about 3500 feet. The territory through which it

[1] The estimated length of the entire active public ministry of Jesus is about two years. The accepted dates vary; probably the most nearly correct are 27–29 A. D. The Fourth Gospel extends the length of time to three years.

passes is arid and rocky, and without shade or water, until the traveler approaches within two miles of the city where he reaches the slopes of the Mount of Olives.

Jesus must have found the journey up this mountain road wearisome and exhausting. It was his last ascent, and the burden he bore upon his heart weighed heavily upon him. He was even now, as he climbed and trod this hard and lonely way, upon the *via dolorosa* which was to lead him to the cross. Far up, within two miles of Jerusalem, on the eastern slope of Olivet, lay Bethany. Beyond, along the western base of the Mount of Olives, extended the Valley of Jehoshaphat, traversed by the ancient brook Kidron. Directly in the ravine, but east of the Kidron, was the garden of densely growing olive trees known as Gethsemane.[1] Westward, and up from the ravine toward the base of the walls of Jerusalem, lay the wooded territory with its central little village of Bethphage. And finally, around the wall to the north of the city, near the Damascus gate, stood the skull-shaped knoll or hill known as Golgotha.[2]

Accompanied by the Twelve and other loyal followers, among them particularly the devoted women from Galilee, Jesus reached Bethany on the eve of the preparation for the Jewish feast of the Passover. There, in the home of Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus, he rested in order to make the necessary arrangements for his solemn and triumphant entry into Jerusalem. On the morning following the last Sabbath before the Passover [3] he sent two of the disciples upon a peculiar mission.[4] The kingliness of this premeditated act of Jesus aroused immediate attention. It made a direct appeal to the popular Messianic hope. The Twelve, fearful in anticipation of what awaited them at Jerusalem, were amazed. When the colt was brought into the presence of Jesus the onlooking populace did not need to be informed of his intent. The language of sacred

[1] Gethsemane means literally, not olive garden, but olive or oil press.

[2] The exact identity of Golgotha or Calvary is unknown. The hill just outside of Jerusalem on the Damascus road best satisfies the circumstances of the Gospel narrative. See Hastings' Dictionary of the Gospels, Vol. I, pp. 657 and 855.

[3] I. e., on Sunday, Nisan 9, probably 29 A. D.

[4] Mark XI:1–10.

scripture which everyone knew offered its interpretation.[1] With one accord, as an act of homage, the people brought their outer garments and spread them out before him, some of them being used as ornamental trappings, others as a varicolored carpet upon the highway. With waving palm branches, and with loud acclaim of joyous hosannas, probably in the words of scripture taken from the Psalms and books of the prophets, Jesus was publicly welcomed to the throne and the kingdom of David.[2] Luke, whose narrative [3] augments the record of Mark, presents in this connection a scene of three distinct pictures. The background of the scene is the wooded slope of Olivet overlooking the Kidron. Jerusalem lies just across the valley. Its representatives are present in the persons of the rebuking and plotting Pharisees. The multitudes, living in the moment and heedless of the morrow, give vent to exhilarating praise. Jesus himself, though kingly, is brokenhearted with grief for the endangered peace of Israel. He weeps with sorrow amid exulting voices; his tears are mingled with their songs.

Upon his arrival in the city, Jesus visited the temple. What he saw once more filled him with sadness and indignation. However he said nothing, for the evening was near and the crowds were rapidly dispersing. Alone with the Twelve he left the city and returned to Bethany to spend the night.

The early morning [4] found the little company again on its way to Jerusalem. The hospitality of the sisters in Bethany had been generous, but Jesus, it appears, had insisted upon sparing them the task of providing the morning meal. Journeying their way they saw, at a little distance from the road, a fig tree whose fresh foliage gave the normal sign and promise of ripening fruit.[5] Investigation, however, proved it to be barren. Hungry for food, Jesus had sought the tree; still hungry, but now de-

[1] See Zech. IX:9.

[2] See Psalms VIII:2 and CXVIII:25–26.

[3] Luke XIX:38–44.

[4] Monday of the Passion week, i. e., Nisan 10.

[5] The fruit of the fig tree usually appears before the foliage, which later protects it from the hot sun. Figs ripen, in this region of Palestine, about the middle of May. The time of the incident was late in March or early in April.

ceived and disappointed, he was obliged to turn away from it. The fig tree was a parable of Judaism. Israel was spiritually barren. From all outward appearances it was still vigorous and promising. Its ecclesiastical foliage was ornamentally attractive. Now and then it offered a moment's shade to a road-weary traveler. It was indeed a fruit tree, and had been planted as such in the garden of the world's great religious faiths. But it was barren.[1]

When, on the following day, the disciples, taking note of the fig tree, found it withered, the parable was transformed before them into a miracle, the purpose of which was to strengthen them in their reliance upon faith. Jesus wished thereby to teach a three-fold lesson: (1) that the only life of fruitfulness and of power is a life of faith; (2) that faith is unquestionably conditioned on fellowship with God; (3) that such fellowship with God is possible only to those who are able to love and to forgive.[2] Hatred, bigotry, and more than half meaningless religious ceremonialism were eating out the heart of the Jewish religion. Judaism was in need of a strong spiritual prophet to restore it to life; but such a prophet, Jesus knew, would not be heeded; he would not even be tolerated. A nation that stoned and killed its own prophets was indeed beyond redemption.

Yet it was to such a nation that Jesus felt himself called. The ties of race and of a common spiritual hunger and hope held him to his own people. Once more, therefore, he began to preach and to teach, this time with more than his accustomed prophetic passion and zeal. Finding himself at last in the nation's capital, he became for a few brief days its mighty and unsparing oracle of God. He spoke openly and with utter fearlessness. With his enemies, the chief priests and Pharisees, angered to the point of frenzy, he stood protected by the bare truthfulness of his utterances and by unquestioned popular favor. The pictures, presented at this time by the evangelists, of Jesus in controversy with the Jewish temple authorities, are

[1] Cf. here Luke XIII:6–9.

[2] For this interpretation, read carefully Mark XI:23–26, and note the transition from faith, first to prayer and then to forgiveness.

in striking contrast to those in which, by the shore of the sea of Galilee, he utters, with gracious and winsome words, the message of the Sermon on the Mount or the parables of the kingdom. The Galilean herald of the Gospel became, for a brief period, Jehovah's flaming messenger of judgment. The lowly Nazarene became Israel's princely judge; the servant of man became the strong son of God.

When, accordingly, on the second day of the week, following the episode of the fig tree, Jesus appeared in the temple, he was not long in accepting the challenge of the scene that confronted him. His indignation at the crude display of materialism and irreverence in the sanctuary of God was fully justified. The priests had for many years had a questionable record. Some of them had been guilty of bribery, others of murder. Annas, who is later mentioned in the trial of Jesus, was a man of exceedingly bad reputation.[1] Caiaphas, the reigning high priest, seems to have been only slightly better. Intrigue and theft among them were common sins. The requirements of the temple tax offered the money changers abundant opportunity for crime.[2] The situation in the temple called for reform. Jesus did not hesitate to be the reformer. The scribes and chief priests, in turn, at once sensed the danger of his interference. It was not possible for them to allow themselves to be put into the position of the defensive. They must take immediate action against Jesus. Plot and violence were to be the chosen weapons. Death for this newly found enemy was the object of their design.

II. THE GREAT ARRAIGNMENT

The next morning[3] found them determined and ready for action. An all night conference of the priests and scribes and leading Jewish elders had prepared them for a strong counter attack. Their hope to destroy the popularity of Jesus had been

[1] See Josephus, Antiq. XX:9 ff.

[2] The temple tax had to be paid in Hebrew currency. The rate of exchange was usually exorbitant.

[3] Tuesday of the Passion week.

abandoned. The only course open was to challenge his authority.[1] This they forthwith proceeded to do. Jesus himself willingly accepted the challenge. The answer he gave them involved the character and prophetic ministry of John the Baptist. But it did more: it compelled his subtle questioners to pass unsparing judgment upon themselves. Having silenced them, he directed the controversy to the well known ground of an old prophetic parable. It was one concerning which they could not possibly feign unfamiliarity.[2] Every Jewish teacher could repeat it from memory. Its theme centered about the fruitlessness and faithlessness of Israel. The parable, as Jesus presented it, was like a sharp knife in the hands of a skilful surgeon. It was applied to a well recognized but adroitly hidden national sore. The effect was extraordinary. Jesus' hearers were shocked. The multitude expressed loyalty and praise; the representatives of the Sanhedrin were bitterly offended. Temple guards were at the posts and Roman soldiers were on hand to arrest Jesus, but, for the moment, no effort was made to take him prisoner. He had spoken the truth, and the self-condemned had no power to resist.[3]

The day of controversy,[4] which proved to be the last of his public ministry, was long and eventful. Four main incidents were crowded into it. The first of these was the Pharisaic challenge which, we have already noted, found its answer in Jesus' counter challenge followed by three parables. The second was signalized by an attack upon Jesus by the representatives of three religious groups: the Herodians, the Sadducees, and the scribes. The third centered upon the seven woes pronounced by Jesus on the scribes and Pharisees. The fourth was Jesus' departure from the temple and his sorrowful lament over its destruction and the fall of Jerusalem.

[1] Mark XI:27–33.

[2] Isaiah's parable, found in Is. V:1–7. See also Ps. LXXX:12–13.

[3] Matthew here adds two further parables: that of the Two Sons, and that of the Royal Marriage Feast. See Matthew XXI:28–31, and Matthew XXII:1–14. The first illustrates Israel's history of broken promises; the second, the orthodox Jewish contempt for new experiences and revelations of religious truth. Cf. here John XII:20–32.

[4] It is still Tuesday of the Passion week.

The enemies of Jesus had now fully determined upon his death. In order, however, to have him committed into their hands, two important steps were necessary: he must first be found guilty of a plausible and popularly acceptable charge; he must then be quietly arrested and hurriedly tried and led to execution. Jesus, it is apparent, was fully aware of their designs. The unscrupulous priests and stealthy lawyers were not able to work entirely in the dark. Jesus was not without friends even in Jerusalem.[1] The frequent absence of Judas, and his secret visits to the temple, were not unknown to him. It was evident that the crisis was at hand; the hour of his self-surrender was imminent. Nevertheless, there was yet work to do and he must toil until the sunset of life's day. As he had spoken in Galilee and along the Perean shores of the Jordan, so must he bear witness in Judea and Jerusalem. It was the Father's will that he should thus fulfil his mission. Accordingly, for one more day, he became the prophet and the teacher.

When, in the course of the day, the deputies of Pharisees and the Herodians invited him to discuss with them the question of the customary tribute to Cæsar, Jesus turned the occasion into an opportunity of teaching the great lesson that loyalty to institutions or governments should neither conflict with, nor take priority over, loyalty to truth.[2] Similarly, when the Sadducees spoke with ridicule and denial of the resurrection, he met them fully on their own ground. Marvelingly he pointed out their own gross ignorance of the scriptures and of the power of God. Then simply and convincingly he spoke of the life to come. Belief in immortality, he taught, is based upon belief in God: as God lives man is immortal; for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Concerning the nature or state of individual life after death, Jesus ventured only to say that it so

[1] Mary, the mother of Mark, the author of the Second Gospel, must have been among them. It was her home, in all probability, that contained the upper room in which Jesus met his disciples for the last supper and the words of farewell that preceded his arrest.

[2] Mark XII:13–17.

far transcends any form of earthly existence that it is best described as comparable to the altogether heavenly and perfect life of angels.[1] Again, when the youthful honest scribe, representing the noblest spiritual instinct of his class and race, came to Jesus wishing to know what he regarded as the greatest commandment, or the supreme goal of human life, the answer of Jesus was neither evasive or heretical.[3] It was a reference to familiar scripture. The great truth, Jesus wished to suggest, was there; it had already been revealed. What was needed was its realization and immediate practical application to life. The inference was that Jesus had not come to add a body of his own individual teachings to the sacred Hebrew scriptures, much less to seek to oppose or displace them. He wished only to relate them to the deep currents of the individual spiritual life from which they had originally come. Finally, when Jesus made his last free appearance in the presence of the multitudes, he had left the inner temple precincts and had come to the outer court of the Gentiles. There, suddenly the teacher gave place to the prophet. The crucial moment had come. As at the time of the crisis in Galilee, so now he desired an answer to the supreme question.[3] Though the emphasis had changed, there was the same anxious note of inquiry. "What think ye of Christ?" he asked of those who stood about him. The reply was not like that which once came from the lips of Peter. Nevertheless it was what Jesus had expected. It was exactly typical of the minds of the Pharisees. The discourse which followed may aptly be called the great final arraignment.[4] Its substance is contained in the seven woes with which Jesus bade farewell to the Jewish religious leaders. Pharisaism was intrenched in every stronghold of the ancient Hebrew faith. In Galilee, in Perea, and in Judea,

[1] Matthew XXII:23–33.

[2] Mark XII:28–34. Cf. Deut. VI:4 and Lev. XIX:18. Jesus here placed the two ancient commandments side by side. Though once separated, they now belonged together.

[3] Matthew XXII:41–45. See also reference to Peter's great confession.

[4] See Matthew XXIII. Cf. Mark XII:38–40. Note how Matthew's chapter elaborates upon the three verses in Mark.

it had been the opposing factor in the progress of the gospel of the new kingdom. The people were blind in ignorance, but seeking the light; the Pharisees themselves were blind through their own hypocrisy and conceit.

Having ended the final discourse Jesus retired to an inner court of the temple, the place known as the court of the Jewish women. Here he sat down to rest. The seat he occupied was opposite the temple treasury, where he observed the payment of the temple tribute. The rich, he noticed generally gave ostentatiously; the poor apologetically. Which of the two types of gifts was spiritually the greater? The widow who entered and, approaching the treasury, dropped into it two very small half farthings gave Jesus the answer. The rich were giving what they did not need; the devoted poor, through their gifts, were offering a sacrifice of themselves.

III. THE FINAL PROPHECY

It was late in the afternoon when Jesus and the disciples left the city. Again they crossed the Kidron and slowly ascended the slope of Olivet. For a moment's rest they paused to turn about and to look across the valley toward Jerusalem. The last rays of the sun were fading from view behind the capitol hills. Darkness was about to fall as a mantle upon the region below. Jesus, wearied in mind and body, sat down. Then once more he looked toward the city. What he now saw was not outwardly apparent to the human eye. It presented itself as an apocalyptic vision of the events of coming years.[1] The discourse which followed astonished his anxious listeners. It has since equally astonished and impressed the Christian world. Was Jesus, historically speaking, himself an apocalyptist? Did he share literally the views expressed in these late chapters of the Synoptic record, or must we take into account, while reading them, the interpretative setting given them by the later evangelists? Unexpected and surprising as these words of judgment indeed were, they could not have

[1] The apocalyptic passages in Mark XIII fall into three parts: V:5–13; 14–23; and 24–37.

sounded altogether unfamiliar. Apocalyptic discourse had been in common currency for several centuries.[1] Its origin, it has already been noted, dated back to the most fruitful years of Messianic prophecy. Two forms of belief or hope had by that time arisen with regard to Israel's future. The one of these had been the hope of a restored temporal Hebrew kingdom; the other had assumed the character of a great ideal, a noble dream of a regenerated human society, a redeemed world, and a radiant individual and universal immortality. When, in the course of time, the two conceptions became intimately associated, the result was a form of doctrine or hope known as Millennarianism,[2] according to which the national Messianic era—later transformed into an era of the rule of the saints—was to be followed by a period of the general resurrection and the final judgment, and finally by the creation of a new heaven and a new earth.

Whatever may be the source of the apocalyptic element in the Synoptic narrative of the Olivet discourse of Jesus, it is clearly more than a merely prophetic utterance. It is an intimately personal and illuminative lesson on the nature and future destiny of the Kingdom. As in all else, the thought of Jesus centers here upon God. The kingdom of God is His rule on earth; it is the triumph of right over wrong, of truth over falsehood, of life over death. Finally it is the sign of assurance of the reality, the sovereignty, and the perpetuity of the world of the spirit. Of this truth Jesus was utterly convinced. The task assigned to him of establishing this kingdom among men could not be hastily accomplished. The building of the church would require his continued presence throughout the ages. This abiding presence, he promised his disciples, was to begin with the event of his resurrection. His death, now clearly foreordained, would give his enemies but a momentary victory. There would be a brief day of intense suffering and of bitter sorrow; after

[1] The Book of Daniel, the greatest O. T. apocalyptic writing, was written c. 178 B. C.

[2] The millennium meant literally a period of a thousand years.

that another of lonely sadness and separation; then the resumed companionship and glory of his eternal presence.[1]

Having clarified in the presence of his disciples the fact and providential character of his death, it remained for Jesus to prepare them to endure the testing shock to which it would subject their faith. How heavily this task lay upon his heart is apparent. Its accomplishment centered in two parables recorded in the Gospel of Matthew.[2] The purpose of the one was to create in the disciples a spirit of expectancy for his earthly return; the aim of the other was to make a final earnest appeal to their sense of loyalty. Taken together, the stories of the ten virgins and the ten talents sound an anxious note of warning. The message of the one is, "Be awake"; that of the other, "Go to work." The building of the kingdom of Christ was to be committed only to those who were first watchful, then faithful.

[1] Here cf. Mark XIII:26 with John XVI:16–22.
[2] Matthew XXV:1–30.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PASSION AND RESURRECTION

THE day following[1] Jesus' controversy with the leading Jews and his farewell message to Jerusalem was spent by him in Bethany, in peaceful retirement with intimate friends. Among the most devoted of these were Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus. The circle of intimacy, however, extended beyond the house of Mary. Simon, once a leper, but now healed and held in honor by the community, belonged to it. This good man was especially known for his friendly hospitality. His invitation to Jesus to be his guest seems not to have been unexpected. It may, indeed, have been a part of Jesus' own plan once more, before undertaking his solemn mission of suffering, to spend a little while in quiet social contact with some of those close friends whose love and loyalty had been a special comfort to him in the past. Martha and Lazarus were probably present at the banquet; Mary seems certainly to have been there.[2] It is very natural to assume that she was herself the woman who came with the alabaster cruse of ointment to anoint Jesus. Her act was the worthy tribute of a noble and a saintly soul. Its solemn significance to Jesus could not have become clear to the disciples until after his death. Her anointment was not for his Davidic kingship but for his burial. Jesus accepted it as a memorial of sincere undying love.[3]

I. THE LAST SUPPER

Thursday of the Passion week found Jesus alone with the disciples. He was now about to bid them farewell and to give

[1] Wednesday of the Passion week.

[2] Cf. Mark XIV:1–9 with John XII:1–2.

[3] Not a few Biblical scholars identify Mary of Bethany further with Mary Magdalene. So, e. g., David Smith, "In the Days of His Flesh," p. 388. The majority, however, believe that there are too many difficulties in the way of such an identity.

them their apostolic commission.[1] His own ministry was ended, and his earthly life was quickly drawing to its tragic close. The possibility, from the beginning remote, of conciliating the hostile Jewish leaders, had disappeared. Before him, instead, was the vivid and immediate actuality of his death. Of this fact he had been made certain not only by the changing popular attitude but by the behavior of one of his disciples. Judas Iscariot had for a long time been a disappointed follower of Jesus. He had come to consider himself deceived by the unwillingness of his master to become the currently expected Messiah. When, at last, he noted the open Jewish hostility and the consequent futility of his Messianic hopes under the leadership of Jesus, he yielded to malicious anger and desperation. In this mood he was a fit person for a bribe. The chief priests, quick to discern Judas' ready display of his disaffection, made the offer, and the vicious bargain was closed. The former disciple became the traitor. Selfishness and revenge were driving him to offer the life of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. His later bitter repentance revealed to him his own deadly mistake. Judas had not been an altogether bad man; he had at one time cultivated and heard the voice of conscience which he now found himself utterly powerless to destroy.

The Gospels tell us that Jesus knew what was in the heart of Judas. He understood Judas and sympathized and forgave. But it was not possible for Jesus any longer to regard him as one of the chosen Twelve. His presence had become a discordant note in the circle of harmonious fellowship. Now that one of their number had forsaken him and them, Jesus wished more than ever to be intimately alone with his friends. He had much to teach them, and he needed their comfort even as they needed his.

[1] Mark XIV:12 advances the meeting of Jesus with the disciples for the Passover to Friday, i. e., the "day of the unleavened bread." This is probably done to make the time correspond to the adopted Jewish calendar. The Passover actually began with Friday evening, Nisan 14. According to Mark's chronology—also adopted by Matthew and Luke—the crucifixion must have occurred on the Passover day, i. e., on Saturday of the week. The Fourth Gospel, however, names Thursday as the day of the last supper.

The preparation of the last Passover was entrusted to Peter and John. The guest-chamber was probably in the house of Mary, the mother of young John Mark who afterward became the author of the oldest of the four Gospels.[1] The greater part of the day was required to get ready for the meal. The lamb, previously procured,[2] was brought to the temple for its offering of consecration; the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, and the wine were provided; last of all, the room was adequately furnished and the supper table set for the occasion. Jesus and the remaining disciples arrived in the evening. The men appear to have been surprised and pleased with the touch of elaborateness which marked the now completed preparations. Would the event which they anticipated be crowned by a proper ceremonial observance of the order of rank which Jesus himself would prescribe to each of the Twelve?[3] Jesus read their thoughts even though he did not hear their words.

The feast began with a prayer of thanks, followed by the drinking of a cup of diluted wine and the eating of bitter herbs lightly dipped into a bowl of crushed and sour fruits. It continued with a homily or word of interpretation concerning the meaning and significance of the feast. Then followed a song[4] and the solemn rite of the breaking of the bread which, too, was dipped into the acid-broth. Last of all, a steward brought the prepared parts of the Passover lamb. Here the feast reached its climax. The eating of the lamb was accompanied by a further breaking of bread, and concluded with the drinking of a final cup, the so-called cup of blessing, and with a parting song or chant.[5]

The night of the Passover was the last of Jesus' earthly life. The incidents associated with it came, accordingly, to have an immediate special significance. Three of these particularly command our attention. The first of them is recorded alone by the

[1] Some writers hold that the friendly host may have been Simon the Leper, or perhaps Joseph of Arimathea.

[2] See Exodus XII concerning the ceremonial preparation for the Passover.

[3] See Luke XXII:24–30.

[4] The first part of the Hallel.

[5] The second part of the Hallel.

author of the Fourth Gospel. Because of the symbolism of the act in which it centers, it may very properly be called a parable, the parable of the unwashed feet.[1] It belongs to the group of acted, as compared with the spoken, parables. By means of it Jesus taught his disciples an unforgettable lesson in humility. The figure of Jesus, clothed in the garb of a household slave, and, with his own ministering and loving hands, transforming a servile task into a spiritual sacrament, is beautifully and divinely impressive. It gives no social sign of either inferiority or superiority. It represents the noblest humanity touched and made sublime by the spirit and love of God.

The second incident associated with the last Passover of Jesus centered on Judas. By this time Jesus definitely knew him to be a traitor. It is difficult to believe that Judas was not aware of this plain fact. The situation had, therefore, come to be more than embarrassing; it was heart-breaking. Jesus' affectionate appeal to Judas had met with no response. Unblushingly the disaffected disciple had received both the ministrations of Jesus and the offered bribe of the chief priests. But the hour of suffering for Judas, like that for Jesus, was not far off. Like his master, but for reasons of his own, he, too, was about to drink from the bitter cup of a deep and agonizing sorrow. There was for him also, accordingly, a grave symbolism in the ritual of the bitter herbs and of the bread dipped in the vinegar-laden fruit. To Jesus it was prophetic of his taste of death for the deliverance of humanity from its bondage to sin; to Judas, as he received the bitter dripping morsel from the hand of Jesus, it meant the awful sorrow of a gnawing and soul-destroying remorse which was presently to lead him to desperation and to self-inflicted death.

The third incident occurred as a climax to the event of the Last Supper. It took the form of a reinterpretation of the sacred Passover against the background of Jesus' imminent suffering and death. The clear revelation had come to him that he was himself to be the paschal lamb whose sacrifice was to atone for

[1] John XIII:1–16. It introduces the memorable series of communion discourses found in the Gospel of John. (Chapters XIV–XVII.)

human guilt and sin. In order to teach the lesson which this sublime truth implied, Jesus once more turned the attention of the disciples to the symbolism of the solemn occasion. Again it was by means of a parable, this time both acted and spoken, that Jesus sought to convey his final message to his followers. Taking for this reason, the portion of bread which remained to be eaten with the passover lamb, he broke it before them and gave the pieces to the Twelve with the words: "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." Then, when the supper was ended, he passed around among them the Cup of Blessing while he added: "This is the new covenant of my blood which is shed for you: this also do in remembrance of me."

There are three elements contained in this last parable of Jesus which have elevated it to a supreme place among the sacraments of the Christian church. The first is the emphasis which Jesus placed upon intimate and loving friendship. Jesus wished to be remembered. It is sad as death—once to be loved, and then to be forgotten. The second is the new interpretation which, by means of this parable, Jesus gave to vicarious human suffering. Love that suffers is divine. It reveals the character of God. It is the sign of his presence. It is redemptive. The third outstanding element of this sacrament is its mystical suggestiveness. It emphasizes and satisfies the intinctive human hunger for fellowship with God. It symbolizes the soul-sustaining presence of Christ in the life of the Christian believer.

II. GETHSEMANE

It was late in the night when, with the supper ended and the parting hymn sung, Jesus and his companions left the upper room and the city. Following a path that led downward into the valley of the Kidron, they crossed over to a secluded place on the lower slope of the Mount of Olives.[1] This hidden spot was in a thicket of olive trees which grew in an enclosed rock-strewn garden familiarly known as Gethsemane, or the garden of the olive press. It had been a place of frequent resort to

[1] Mark XIV:26–42.

Jesus during the days just past, and was well known to Judas the betrayer. Jesus entered the garden, overcome by grief and by a sudden and strong temptation. His companionship with the disciples had aroused in him a deep pity for them in the loneliness they were about to endure. They needed him. Then, too, he needed and wanted them. Life cried out to him, and youth responded. Jesus was not abnormally eager to die; he was not possessed with any morbid desire for martyrdom. It was life that he had come to bring, and he had wished, all his days, to exemplify it in its natural spiritual perfection. Would the event of his death aid or defeat this great primary purpose? Was there virtue, moreover, in dying, while there was yet the chance to live? The struggle in the garden clearly indicates that Jesus foresaw the possibility of a personal escape. It was night, and out across the Mount of Olives toward the desert there was at least the chance of freedom. But what was his freedom by comparison with the doing of the will of God? The agonizing prayer that followed was no mere formality. Neither was it simply an act of personal preparation for a divinely foreordained and, therefore, inevitable event. It was a great spiritual conflict involving a personal and an adventurous decision. It was a soul battle fought with the weapon of faith. In the supremest sense Jesus here risked his life on God.[1] As in the wilderness after the baptism, and again on the mount of the transfiguration, so now he was face to face with a crisis. He had, from the first moment of his call, sought resolutely to do the Father's will. He must do it now even unto the draining of the bitter cup of death. To do the will of God, as interpreted by Jesus, meant to share with Him the burden of human redemption from sin and guilt. Love alone was equal to so stupendous a task. The test of love is its capacity for self-sacrifice; its fruit or reward is spiritual peace and tranquillity. Jesus came from the garden fully prepared for the cross.

[1] The record in Luke XXII:39–46 clearly answers the claim of Docetism, whether ancient or modern, that the humanity of Jesus was only apparent. To view the prayer life of Jesus in any other light than that of our common human experience is to violate the plain truth of the Gospel record.

The disorganized mob which came to arrest Jesus was made up of unscrupulous characters, most of them the hirelings or slave servants of the chief priests.[1] Some of them came with swords, others with clubs; their leader was neither the high priest nor a Roman soldier, but Judas. His weapon was a traitor's kiss. This sign of the betrayal was an ugly travesty upon the sacred prerogative of friendship. Perhaps Judas wished thereby to escape recognition as the betrayer and thus evade seizure and injury at the hands of the remaining faithful disciples, several of whom, sensing some form of danger, had secretly armed themselves for the emergency.[2] Jesus, expectant of the outcome, made no protest, but quietly submitted to his arrest. His tranquillity astonished and shocked the bystanders. Then, apparently, an effort was made to arrest the disciples. The plan, however, miscarried. Nor was a further action to overcome them necessary; the men, hitherto Jesus' faithful followers, had fled. Betrayed by one of the disciples, soon thereafter to be denied by another, and after that deserted by all, Jesus presents, indeed, a pathetic and heroic figure. Yet there is in the Gospel portrait thus presented no element of exaggeration; it is the humiliatingly confessed account of the disciples themselves.[3]

III. THE TRIAL OF JESUS

In Mark's Gospel the narrative of the trial and death of Jesus is comparatively brief. The reason is apparent in the view of the writer, that Jesus' ministry of heroic self-sacrifice could in no other way have been brought to its natural and fitting climax. Matthew and Luke, on the other hand, look beyond the

[1] Mark XIV:43–52. Cf. John XVIII:1–8. The account of the Fourth Gospel asserts that Roman troops garrisoned in the castle of Antonia were sent to take Jesus captive. As compared with the simple narrative of Mark, we have here a typical example of the influence of early Christian tradition upon the late Gospel account.

[2] Luke XXII:38. These weapons, according to a well known quotation from Chrysostom, may have been the knives which Peter and John had used in slaying and dressing the Paschal lamb.

[3] Regarding the sufferings of Jesus, Professor C. F. Kent quotes from Leonard as follows: "One pain, at least, was spared Jesus: he had not to suffer the pain of mocking his own visions by any disloyalty or weakness in himself."

historical event of Jesus' death to its far-reaching redemptive purpose. The saviourhood of Jesus, though not separated from his prophetic ministry, becomes the increasing concern of the developing Christian church. The evangelistic career and letters of Paul, which form a partial background for the two later Synoptic Gospels, affirm this growing theological tendency. The early Christians, as the time passed, needed more than a memory book of the life of Jesus; the demand was for an interpretative gospel, a gospel centering upon the person and redemptive mission of Christ. The Gospel of John appeared as the fulfilment of this need. Like those of Matthew and Luke, its account of the passion and resurrection of Jesus is adequately detailed and complete.

The trial of Jesus, according to the entire Gospel record, proceeded in the following manner: (1) There was first an examination of Jesus in the house of Annas, the retired high priest; (2) this incident was followed by an early morning trial before a group of hastily assembled representatives of the Jewish Sanhedrin; (3) after that Jesus was presented before Pilate where the Jewish leaders demanded that he be sentenced to death; (4) then followed another examination, this time before Herod, whose purpose was purely diplomatic and designed also for the humiliation of Jesus; (5) finally there occurred a closing scene before Pilate, which resulted in a victory for the mob and in the scourging and sentencing of Jesus.

On Friday before daybreak Jesus was brought to the house of Annas. Although Annas was succeeded in the office of high priest by Caiaphas his own son-in-law, he continued in power in the Jewish Sanhedrin of which the high priest was officially the leader.[1] The priests were, as a rule, men of the Sadducean party, the party which held the person and teachings of Jesus in open contempt. The conspiracy which involved the treason of Judas, the gathering and control of the mob, and the subsequent perversion of justice, both in the assembly of the Sanhedrin and in the presence of Pilate, were, without doubt, the

[1] Annas was high priest from 7–14 A.D.; Caiaphas from 18–36 A.D. Both were notorious characters.

work of Annas. The indignities which, as a humiliated and silent prisoner, Jesus suffered at the hands of the coarse and brutal mob that gathered in Annas' courtyard, afforded the ex-high priest the kind of cheap and pagan pleasure exactly suited to his character. The courtyard scene is, however, chiefly remembered for its association with Peter. It was the scene of his denial of Jesus. Fear and curiosity struggled together in the heart of the impulsive disciple. Love for his master, wearisome suspense, and the penetratingly moist air of the early morning, drew him to the kindled fire. He hoped, amid the crowd and the confusion, to escape notice, or at least recognition. But Peter was not the kind of man to be lost in the crowd. Both in character and in speech he was outstanding; he attracted attention, he possessed personality. The realization that he had been discovered and the momentary fear of certain arrest took him unawares. The crisis found him morally off guard. In denying not only his discipleship but even his acquaintance with Jesus he revealed a universal human weakness. His act is proof of the suddenness and power with which man's natural instincts momentarily over-ride his moral and spiritual principles. But Peter came back. Realization was followed by repentance. The shock of his tragic experience converted the cowardly Simon into the steadfast and heroic Peter.[1]

As soon as the arrival of day permitted, the priests called a meeting of the Jewish Sanhedrin. The place of meeting was within the temple area known as the Hall of the Hewn Stone. Caiaphas presided. Jesus, between guards, was brought before him. The entire procedure which followed was a deliberate and tragic mistrial. Its illegality was notorious. It was in almost every respect a violation of the Jewish criminal law.[2] The purpose

[1] The Greek word "petros" means stone; "petra," its cognate form, designates rock.

[2] In the following aspects the law was violated by the Sanhedrin trial: It was held on a feastday; on the day before the Sabbath; before witnesses for the defense could first be heard; without sufficient examination of the evidence against the defendent; without a quorum (23 persons) and a written record of the vote; without the lapse of a day before the passing of the sentence; without due respect for the person of the defendant.

of the trial, it was apparent, was not to deal fairly or respectfully with Jesus but to secure the sanction of the law in behalf of a flagrant private conspiracy. The aim of the high priest was not justice but condemnation. The Pharisees would have condemned Jesus as a Sabbath-breaker. The priests, who were Sadducees, chose another ground for their accusation. They produced evil witnesses who charged that Jesus had prophesied against the temple. The charge was not without some foundation; but it represented the truth perverted and misunderstood.[1] The allegation against Jesus was that he was guilty of blasphemy. It was a bold but false statement.

A real difficulty, however, remained to be overcome in order to secure the conviction of Jesus. The trial could not end with the verdict of the Sanhedrin; it had to be carried to the Roman governor.[2] A more weighty cause for the continuance of the trial had, accordingly, to be sought. It was found in Jesus' confession of his Messiahship. Adjured by Caiaphas, Jesus openly met the challenge.[3] Having already undertaken the mission of Jehovah's suffering servant,[4] his answer to the high priest was both plain and justified. This Messianic claim was not itself blasphemous. If it had been, no Messiah could ever have arisen, and the very prophecy of his advent ought to have been accounted a crime. It was only that Caiaphas here saw his opportunity. Under the pretense of a deeply felt religious emotion, he rent his garment as the sign of a great terror or indignation. His act belied his true state of mind. He was in reality thoroughly satisfied with the outcome. As a shrewd and unscrupulous prosecutor he had found his case. A self-styled Messiah was, on general principles, always to be regarded as an enemy to Rome. To tolerate him meant to invite insurrection, perhaps rebellion.

[1] Mark XIII:2. Cf. XIV:58.

[2] The right of imposing capital punishment was taken from the Sanhedrin in 30 A.D. John XVIII:31 refers to this abridgment of Jewish civil authority. The death of Jesus may, however, have taken place in 29 A.D. If so, the motive of the priests in taking Jesus to face Pilate, was thereby to shift the blame for their nefarious deed upon Rome.

[3] Mark XIV:61–62.

[4] Here cf. Isaiah LIII.

In this respect Caiaphas clearly discerned Pilate's opinion.

The trial before Pilate, too, was a travesty of justice. Jesus was made the victim of a high priest's hatred and a Roman governor's irresponsibility. Pilate found the situation crucial. His popularity with the Jews was on the decline. The circumstances of his office made it necessary for him to truckle to the Jewish leaders who regarded him and the entire Roman overlordship with passionate contempt.[1] The scene of the trial was on the broad pavement in front of the procurator's palace. Luke tells us that three accusations were brought against Jesus by the Jews.[2] The first was that he was a recognized perverter of the Hebrew nation; the second that he opposed the payment of the annual tribute to Cæsar; the third that he called himself the Messiah and therefore a king. These charges represented a strange intermingling of truth and falsehood. That some of his teachings were revolutionary was unmistakably true. His Messiahship, likewise, was accepted by a large multitude of people, especially among the Galileans. The statement regarding the Roman tribute was a bare falsehood.[3]

Pilate, desiring to ascertain the facts for himself, asked Jesus if he was the king of the Jews. Jesus made no denial; but he added: "My kingdom is not of this world." The kingly benignancy of Jesus greatly impressed Pilate. The Roman confessed that he had found a Jew without fault. The priests were enraged by the unexpected verdict. It meant, from all appearances, that their prisoner was about to be set free. Their protest perplexed Pilate. He dreaded the certainty of an imminent popular uprising. Then, at the opportune moment, he received word that Jesus was by residence a Galilean. Galilee belonged to the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas who, it happened, was just at this time a visitor in Jerusalem. Jesus was, accordingly, sent

[1] Pilate was cruel, tactless, and cowardly. He was procurator of Judea from 26 to 36 A. D. During festive seasons he came up from Cæsarea and took up his residence either at the palace of Herod situated on the western hill of the city, or at the citadel of Antonia immediately to the northwest of the temple area.

[2] Luke XXIII:2.

[3] See Mark XII:14–17.

to Herod. The pathetic incident that ensued did no more than satisfy the king's curiosity. There was no reason or justice in it; nothing but base barbaric mockery. The attitude of Jesus was one of gentle and silent endurance.

The closing scene of the trial of Jesus occurred on the porch of Pilate's hall. By this time a mob had gathered, and Pilate knew that its demand must be satisfied. He met the crisis with an offer of compromise. From that moment the Jewish leaders were aware that the fate of Jesus was in their hands. They spurned Pilate's suggestion that he be scourged and set free; they voted overwhelmingly for the release of the murderer Barabbas; beside themselves with frenzied fury, they demanded that Jesus be crucified. For once, at least, in its history, imperial Rome bowed to the will of a vulgar mob. Justice failed. Brutal hands were laid upon Jesus. Luke significantly records that Pilate "delivered Jesus to their will."

IV. THE CRUCIFIXION

The cruel scourging had already been accomplished.[1] The next step was to lead Jesus to the place of execution. The name of the place was Golgotha. It was a skull-shaped knoll probably in the vicinity of the Damascus gate which opened to the highway leading northward from Jerusalem. Simon the Cyrenian carried the cross. The broken-hearted women, helpless yet loyal, accompany the procession. Tied as a criminal and mockingly crowned with thorns, Jesus approaches calvary. There the Roman soldiers quickly do their hard and cruel work. Three crosses are planted in the earth: two for already condemned malefactors; the third and highest between them for Jesus.

The scene of the crucifixion is best portrayed in the Gospel

[1] David Smith (In the Days of His Flesh, p. 487) writes as follows about the Roman custom of scourging: "The scourge was a frightful instrument—a whip with several thongs, each loaded with acorn-shaped balls of lead or sharp pieces of stone. Six lictors took the victim, stripped him, bound him to a post, and plied the cruel lash. Each stroke cut into the quivering flesh; the veins, and sometimes the very entrails were laid bare, and often the teeth and eyes were knocked out. It is no wonder that not infrequently the sufferer expired under the torture."

record. Its sublime pathos is for the contemplation of the sanctuary, rather than the study; the mystery of its divine truth is taught to the worshiper rather than the scholar. Two important historical aspects of the scene, however, call for our attention. The first centers in the words of Jesus spoken from the cross; the second refers to the small company of Jesus' disciples, notable among whom were the women, who gathered about the cross and remained there until his death. The four Gospels together report seven words or sayings as spoken by Jesus during these closing moments of his life. The persons through whom these words were originally communicated were the witnessing women, Simon the Cyrenian, and the disciple John.[1] Taken together, they not only suggest the paramount message of the cross, but epitomize the entire life and mission of Jesus. Three great truths shine forth from them: (1) the genuine and perfect humanity of Jesus; (2) his self-forgetful and self-sacrificial love for men; (3) his heroic trust in God. Jesus' death was a fitting climax to his earthly life. It was the crowning miracle of his adventure in faith. But it was more: it was a revelation, first, of the character of God, and, second, of the divine nature, the unlimited spiritual resources, and the eternal destiny of man.

The number of persons surrounding the cross was composed of three groups. Near by, and in full view, were the scribes and priests and their followers. They were the enemies of Jesus; men blind to truth, of coarse and brazen temper, hateful and cruel to the end. A little distance away by themselves sat the Roman soldiers. The parted raiments of Jesus were the pay they had received for their sordid day's work. Yet, hard barbarians though they were, they seem to have been moved by the injustice of the act which their office had compelled them to perform. One of them discerned truthfully, even if he did not

[1] The order in which these words were spoken was probably the following: (1) "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke XXIII:34); (2) "Woman, behold thy son;—behold thy mother" (John XIX:26); (3) "Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise" (Luke XXIII:43); (4) "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Mark XV:34. Cf. Psalms XXII:1); (5) "I thirst" (John XIX:28); (6) "It is finished" (John XIX:30); (7) "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke XXIII:46).

speak feelingly, when he said: "Certainly this was a righteous man." [1] Farther away from the cross, but drawing nearer with the approaching crisis, were the devoted and mourning women. Though outwardly but helpless witnesses, their presence was a consolation to Jesus. There was a purity and an element of experience in their pity which told him that they understood the meaning of his self-surrender. Through suffering they themselves had been taught the divine power and the solemn mystery of love.

The comparatively brief period of Jesus' suffering and the presence of sympathetic friends at the moment of his death saved his body from an ignominious burial. Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, had had no part in that council's unjust condemnation of Jesus. With singular courage he now manifested his sympathy and regard for him by securing from Pilate the possession of Jesus' body. Assisted in his sacred ministration by Nicodemus, likewise a secretly devoted friend of Jesus,[2] he took the body from the cross, wrapped it in fragrant spices and linen, and laid it in the rock-hewn tomb which had been prepared by him as the burial place of his own family.[3] The only interested eye-witnesses of the solemn funeral procession were the devoted weeping women.

V. THE RESURRECTION

The following day was the sabbath of the Passover. It was spent in quiet and religious solitude as the occasion demanded. For the disciples and friends of Jesus it proved to be a day of unutterable grief. The experience through which they had passed was sadly disillusioning. While still in the grip of a desperate personal fear, they received the news of Jesus' death. Some of them had doubtless already begun to return to Galilee; others were probably in hiding in Jerusalem. Mingled with a fear was their deep sense of humiliation. They had failed Jesus in the

[1] Luke XXIII:47.

[2] See John XIX:38–42. Also John III:1–15.

[3] The place of Jesus' burial is not certainly known. It is now most familiarly identified with the site of the so-called Gordon's tomb, near Jeremiah's Grotto, which is very close to the probable scene of the crucifixion.

critical hour, the time of his greatest need. Most depressing of all, however, was the manner in which the tragic outcome had given a shock to their Messianic hope. The events just passed seemed like the closing chapter of a fond but futile dream. From all outward appearances the days of the kingdom of Jesus were over. His body lay in a guarded stone-covered tomb; his immediate followers were terror-stricken and scattered; the chief priests and popular Jewish leaders had gained a signal victory in successfully suppressing another internal revolt. Rome was again securely in power; so also was the Jewish body of the Sanhedrin. Jerusalem was once more assured of a peaceful Passover, and thereafter of an era of theological calm, the calm of undisturbed and unchallenged religious orthodoxy. Then, suddenly, early in the morning after the sabbath, the whole city was astir with an astounding report. Jesus, whom the Jews had condemned to death and slain, had risen. He had walked out of the tomb and had appeared to Mary Magdalene, to the other women who accompanied her, and to several of the original twelve disciples. So far as the records go, no one denied the report except Thomas, one of the disciple group. Once affirmed, it became the most significant event in later New Testament history. From it sprang the origin of the Christian church. It gave rise to renewed hope. Through it the humble disciples of Jesus were transformed into heroic apostles, the traditional Jewish law was definitely displaced by the Christian gospel, and the Roman empire became the fortunate beneficiary of a new and revitalizing religious faith.

The chief gospel source of information regarding the resurrection of Jesus is the brief narrative of the closing chapter of Mark.[1] The record of Matthew augments that of Mark upon whose ending—which later became detached and is now lost—it is undoubtedly based. The narrative of Luke is dependent upon an additional source differing in several considerable details from the story of Matthew.[2] Taken together, the Synop-

[1] I. e., Mark XVI:1–8. The remaining verses of the chapter are a later addition.

[2] According to the Matthew-Mark account, the appearances of Jesus occurred, for the most part, in Galilee; Luke relates them as taking place in Jerusalem.

tic Gospels lay stress upon three facts: the bodily resurrection of Jesus; the apostolic commission to the disciples, and the ascension.[1] For our earliest account, both of the resurrection and of the successive appearances of Jesus to the disciples, we are principally indebted to the apostle Paul. The majority of his letters antedate, by a considerable period, the first three Gospels as they have come down to us in their present form. The first of Paul's statements to make its appearance as actual documentary evidence upon the subject of Jesus' resurrection is found in First Corinthians.[2] Paul is here, for historical purposes, relying upon the verbal narrative of Peter. His own conception of immortality, as set forth in this letter, may well be regarded in the light of his knowledge and view of the resurrection of Jesus.[3]

From the circumstances of the narrative it is sufficiently clear that something very extraordinary had happened. Jesus was alive. He had revealed himself and had fulfilled the promise of his perpetual companionship. The disciples' vision of him had suddenly transformed their lives. Sorrow and despair gave way to hope. The vision of the kingdom returned. The work of Jesus, left temporarily unfinished by his death, was to be brought to a successful completion. The disciples were themselves to become the divinely commissioned apostles to carry the gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth. The resurrection, despite its prediction by Jesus himself, had taken the disciples wholly by surprise. Mark records the amazement with which they received the first Easter message.[4] It came as a distinct

[1] The author of the Fourth Gospel, though writing quite independently, draws more freely from Luke than from Matthew-Mark.

[2] Chapter XV.

[3] Three views of immortality were current in Palestine in the days of Paul. The first was the belief in Sheol—akin to the Greek Hades—generally held up to the time of the exile. The second was the more popular late O. T. belief in a physical resurrection. The Pharisees accepted this doctrine and were its early teachers. The third was the conception that grew out of a contact of Jewish or Christian thought with Greek philosophy. It was the belief—made popular in the Gentile world principally through the teachings of Plato—in a spiritual resurrection or immortality. It was to the Christian modification of this last view that Paul, despite his early orthodox rabbinical training, committed himself.

[4] Mark XVI:8.

shock to their unexpectant hearts. What is certainly apparent, therefore, is that the apostles or evangelists did not themselves invent this final and triumphant gospel story. No lives such as theirs, some of them later to be offered in martyrdom, could have been consecrated, either to a common delusion, or to a merely fabricated popular legend. The faith of the primitive church was the outcome of an unclouded vision and a deliberate realization of the living and life-giving presence of Christ. It assumed the character of a prophetic assurance that the kingdom of Jesus was realizable upon earth; that truth and life and love, as represented in him, were no mere Utopian dream but eternal realities rooted in the spiritual nature of man and inherent in the order of the world.

CHAPTER XXV

THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS

History accords Jesus the first place among the world's greatest teachers. The marked emphasis of past years, upon the priestly and sacrificial mission of Christ, has in more recent times come to be supplemented by an increasing recognition of the importance of his prophetic and teaching ministry. This new educational trend finds its justification in the best authenticated Gospel tradition. The Synoptic Gospels first present Jesus as a teacher. He is reverently and affectionately known as the master; his most intimate followers are his pupils or disciples. The truths he teaches commend themselves to their impressionable and religious minds. Almost immediately, however, they discover that his teachings are more than bare facts or abstract ideals; they realize that he is himself the truth incarnate. His lessons are illustrated by his matchless personality and character. His words are not only truth but life; they are words that set men free; they are divine. Thus gradually the miracle of his self-revelation dawns upon the Twelve. Jesus the teacher is Christ the saviour. He is the word of God become flesh; his character is the character of God humanly revealed and interpreted.[1] In him life and immortality are brought to light among the sons of men. The prophet of Galilee is recognized and proclaimed as the world's Messiah. His teachings are given the seal of approbation by the event of his death. In the light of the cross his words become gospel; they shine forth as truths made radiant and interpreted by love. The teacher-saviour becomes the hope of the ages. His message is for all mankind. Henceforth men are to find in it their answers to the deepest and

[1] The "word" is here, as everywhere throughout the Fourth Gospel, interpreted as the symbol of the divine mind or thought, the instrument for the impartation of divine truth.

most universal questions of their faith in God, in life, in the future of the world, and in the immortality of the soul.

I. GOD

Two questions present themselves as we turn to a brief analysis of Jesus' conception of God. (1) What was Jesus' indebtedness to the Old Testament? (2) What are the elements of clear originality in his religious teachings? Our answer to these questions must be determined by a recognition of the generally arbitrary character of our distinction between the old and the new. Originality is not necessarily synonymous with a so-called quality of firstness. The old and the new are never wholly in contrast. The thought of any age needs the background of the past to make it interpretable. Again, originality is not to be identified with mere novelty. It is to be remembered that, among notable teachers, he is the greatest who presents truth best, and not he who utters it first.

Jesus was not a theologian. His special interests were not in systems of religious or moral philosophy. As a religious teacher he had but one desire which early developed into a passion; it was to do the will of God by a wholehearted gift of himself to his fellowmen. Jesus laid no exclusive claim to a discovery of God. The uniqueness of his message carried within itself the proof that he was bringing the fact of God closer to men's minds, and thereby making the conception and experience of Him more intimately real. His kinship with past Hebrew history is everywhere evident; a confession of it is frequently upon his lips. His acknowledgment of indebtedness to the Old Testament prophets formed a distinct part of his message. He was clearly aware that through them the Hebrew people had arisen to their accepted monotheistic faith.[1] These men were the great moral pioneers of their race. Jesus believed himself honored to be identified with them in the movement of ethical and religious reform for which history had made them distinguished. The intervening time had, however, wrought a marked change.

[1] See Ch. XII regarding the teachings of the prpohets.

Judaism had preserved the ancestral religious traditions, but it had permitted the individual spiritual life to come to a standstill. It lived upon the glory of the past. The creative genius of the race had been slowly absorbed by the conservative influence. Religion had become institutionalized. Through interpretation, it came to be regarded, first, as a systematized order of beliefs; second, as a prescribed routine of duties. It lacked the dynamic of a perpetual spiritual experience. Jesus came to restore religion to its rightful place in the heart of man. Consciousness of God was believed by him to be the supreme fact of man's earthly experience. It formed the basis of Jesus' conception of God which may be summed up in the following statements:

1. In His relation to the world God is the personal and perpetually creating Spirit, Whose existence is the sufficient cause of all life, Who is Himself imminent in all forms and manifestations of life, and Whose beneficent will is revealed in the creatures and laws of nature.

2. In His relationship with man and humanity He is the loving and care-taking Father, from Whose hand His children receive the gift of life, and by Whom it is graciously and individually preserved. His is the power manifested in the enlightened minds of men; His the spirit which stirs within human nature and becomes the actuating moral force in the world. A divine revelation is God's process of coming to complete self-consciousness in human life.

3. As revealed in the person and sacrifice of Christ, God is, (a) the great loving Shepherd Who goes out in search of His lost sheep; (b) man's perfect and compassionate Friend in his loneliest hour; (c) the Saviour graciously forgiving and freeing man from sin; (d) the Power of the universe which comes to the rescue in answer to human prayer; (e) the Giver of immortal and eternal life to those in whom, through character-developing faith, the spiritual nature has developed a fitness to survive. Interpreted in terms of the self-consciousness of Jesus, God was simply the loving Father Who had called him to do His will, to establish His kingdom on earth, to bring peace and goodwill among men, and to open, through his own self-

sacrificial life and death, the way to an abundant and everlasting life. Jesus looked upon his ministry as a divine commission to interpret the nature and character of God. The sum of his teachings may be regarded as a body of spiritual inferences which center upon the sublime fulfilment of this task.

II. LIFE

Jesus taught that man's life is a gracious gift of God. It is, regarded by itself, a thing of beauty and of worth. Received as a trust from God, it should be the object of man's highest and most reverent esteem. He should be its faithful steward. No man's life is his own. It belongs, by the right of creatorship, to God. It is a loan for human investment. Greedily to hoard it, is to lose it; on the other hand, to invest it for others, is to make it fruitful and happy. Wealth, in this true and human sense, is to be computed in terms of character.

Human life, though not evil, is imperfect. Perfection is a divine and not a human characteristic. Man is sinful. He needs the forgiveness both of God and of his fellowmen. Nevertheless, it is in him to strive toward the attainment of ideal goodness. His nature is morally and spiritually perfectable. He has the potentialities of a son of God. What is ideally possible in man becomes vitally actual through his experience of the indwelling of the spirit of Christ. Since human life belongs to God and God Himself is eternal, man has an eternal destiny. At least, the spirit in him is immortal.

III. DEATH

There is no actual death. God-consciousness in the human soul cannot be destroyed. Life, in the Christlike sense, begins with the self-realization of the spirit of God in the human soul. Death is no more than an event in the soul's career. To the Christian believer it is but the gateway to a larger and freer existence. By his own deliberate choice of the cross Jesus removed death's sting, and robbed the grave of its dread and

victory. Life, Jesus would have us realize, is the absolute master of death. God is the God of the living, not of the dead.[1] The heroic saints of all time, now departed and far outnumbering the living upon earth, continue their celestial existence in His presence.

The only death of which the soul need be in fear is that of its ultimate and complete alienation from God. To be separated from God; to be cast into an outer darkness, a lonely and lost soul; to be consumed by an unquenchable fire of thirst for a life that cannot be; to be devoured by an inwardly undying worm; to long for death and yet not to die—from such a hopeless and fearful fate, man should pray to be delivered. Trusting God man may live contentedly; without Him all is lost, even the hope of the soul. Natural death is but the season's harvest of a full-grown and ripened spirit; spiritual death, which is the terrible blight of sin, is the world's great tragedy. It frustrates the plan of God; it causes untold suffering; it is an offense to divine love. Man can, however, be saved from it, according to the inspired example of Jesus, by a simple life of trust and of intimate and uninterrupted fellowship with God.

IV. THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD

Though fully aware of sin and its deadly human consequences, Jesus' outlook upon life was one of healthful optimism. Such faith in God as that which characterized his life rendered pessimism impossible. Tested by the standards of his teaching, a conception of life, to have lasting worth, must be adequate to the moments, however rare, of man's noblest aspirations and experiences. Human values, our innate sense of justice tells us, must be regarded. As God lives, therefore, the truth, which is always fundamentally consistent with itself, must conquer, and the good endure.

The kingdom of God, as outlined by Jesus, is not a fanciful dream. It becomes an immediate reality in the personal lives and social institutions of those who become its members. It is

[1] See Matthew XXII:32.

not a merely novel social doctrine, but a new way of living founded on mutual trust, good will, and self-sacrificing love. Its spirit finds its supreme expression in the newly created order of a world brotherhood in Christ. The Kingdom is both an immediate and inward spiritual possession, and a gradually, though as yet distantly, realizable ideal. Spirituality, according to Jesus, was not to be sought through the cultivation of otherworldly attitudes. The kingdom is not asceticism; it is not to be established apart from the earth, but upon it. Neither, on the other hand, is it temporal meat and drink. It is the rule of the spirit of Jesus among men. Its aim is that the perfect will of God shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven. This ideal, in its fulfilment, will mean a completely and permanently regenerated human society. History is thus given a goal; life has a purpose; hope becomes a reality; faith is justified; the character of God is vindicated.

V. THE ADVENT OF CHRIST

Jesus, at the end of his earthy life, undertook the task of securing the future expansion and perpetuity of his work. His disciples, who were soon to become the apostles of the new faith, needed to be encouraged by the assurance that they were not to be left alone in their effort to lay the foundations of the Kingdom. His promise to return to them, and thereafter to be their constant guide and spiritual teacher, gave them great comfort. The promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. On that day,[1] when the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting apostles, hope was transformed into action. The apostolic commission became a reality. The gospel of Jesus came suddenly to have a new meaning; it was transformed into an instrument of mighty power. The event marked the birthday of the Christian church. Jesus began now not only to be regarded as mankind's great prophet and teacher, but to be worshiped and proclaimed as a world saviour. He was its redeemer, and therefore its rightful ruler and king. The Messianic hope had at last come to fruition; Jesus was the Christ.

[1] See Acts II.

Then, as the years passed, Christian history took an advance step; it passed beyond Pentecost. It entered the period of the written Gospels. These Gospel narratives were made necessary by the passing of the first generation of the disciples of Jesus. Their importance, nevertheless, was regarded as secondary to the expectant and ardent hope of Jesus' early return to earth. A number of apostles yet survived who could bear personal testimony to the Master's promise of his advent. They had themselves heard him speak repeatedly and assuringly, during those last eventful days, of his future and continued companionship with them after his own death. The expectancy of Jesus' return had taken, in the disciples' minds, the form of the current apocalyptic hope.[1] Jesus, they believed, would return physically and suddenly, amid signs of historical and earthly catastrophe. His appearance would mark the beginning of a new cosmic era. The graves would give up their dead. The general resurrection would be followed by a day of universal judgment. Thereafter Jesus would reign upon the recreated earth surrounded by the believing saints. Death itself would be abolished, and with it all traces of sin and sorrow and pain.

Such, in the time of the Synoptic Gospels, was the character of this transformed apocalyptic conception. It presented a beautiful eschatological picture. It produced a radiant faith, and provided a glorious incentive to faithful and sacrificial Christian service. It was shared and taught by the apostle Paul in his early missionary life.[2] Did Jesus likewise share this apocalyptic hope? The earliest Gospel record [3] answers the question affirmatively. Jesus belonged, in a sense, to his own time and race. He was transcendent, however, in a way that even his closest friends and disciples could not fully comprehend. No Gospel account, accordingly, can be supposed to have dealt altogether adequately with his teachings. The profound implications of his message often escaped them. They were compelled to rely upon their own former religious conceptions to give the words

[1] See Ch. XVI for an analysis of apocalyptic prophecy.

[2] See I Thess. and I Cor. XV. Later, however, Paul's conception regarding the Second Coming seems to have undergone a change. See, e. g., Phil. I:21–26.

[3] Mark XIII.

of Jesus a concrete and tangible meaning. It is quite probable, therefore, that, in the apocalyptic passages of the early Gospels, we have Jesus' teachings cast in a literary and theological mold representing the current eschatology of the time.[1]

VI. SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND INSTITUTIONS

Jesus' interest as a teacher was in fundamental ethical principles rather than in social rules or policies. He sought to acquaint men with the circumstantial facts and the motives which underlie all human conduct. He touched life at its source, and explored its innermost depths. Jesus was a moral teacher with a message direct from God. He regarded the moral law as a divine command. Yet he was no metaphysical supernaturalist. He was practical. He met men where they were, and at the point of their greatest need. He was socially minded. His respect for law and government was genuine and unquestioned. But he was not an institutionalist. He valued life itself above any ordered system whereby men generally sought to regulate it. In a word, he regarded living as an art rather than a science. In social matters he seems to have trusted instinct rather than any form of acquired technique. Institutions were regarded by him as merely regulative agencies, and not as creative forces. Everywhere among those about him he looked for and encouraged spontaneity of action. He sought to win loyalty through love.

In common with other great teachers, Jesus looked upon the family as the social unit. He taught the sacredness of the home and of marriage. Children were the pattern of the perfect spiritual life. Jesus chose the symbolism of the family as the basis for his message of the Kingdom. He paid fatherhood the sublime tribute of interpreting through it his conception of God. Marriage was regarded by him as a spiritual bond; its dissolution, except perhaps under the most unusual circumstances, was a violation of a divine law.[2] Divorce, at all events, is a con-

[1] Cf. Matthew X:23; Matthew XVI:27–28; Mark XIII:26; and Mark XIII:32. Note the divergency of views these passages present. Verses like Mark XIII:20 reflect clearly the influence of later history.

[2] Mark X:2–12. Later Christian tradition, based upon the words of Jesus, further

cession to human weakness. It reflects a low degree of spiritual development. It is an offense against the principle of social unity based upon self-sacrificing love.[1]

The New Testament gives her deserved freedom to woman. It has become both her individual and social Magna Charta. Jesus' teaching places woman upon a plane of unrestricted equality with man. Being man's equal, and not either inferior or superior to him, she is to be man's partner, his companion, and friend. Her weaknesses, like man's, were the object of Jesus' constant sympathy. He sought to help her by a cultivated understanding of her nature, and, as occasion demanded, by gentle reproof. He appreciated the weight of woman's family burden. He commended her loyalty, and exalted the beauty of her sacrificial life.

Nowhere do we have a clearer reflection of the character of Jesus than in his attitude toward child life. He loved children because he found himself in spiritual kinship with them. The appeal of their nature was irresistible. He was deeply moved by their free unconsciousness, their frank curiosity, their teachableness, their capacity of spiritual perception, and, above all, by their unfeigned display of genuine affection and trust. Jesus made the child the pattern of the perfect man. The kingdom of God would come, he promised, when all men had learned to emulate and develop the noblest characteristics of the child.

Jesus spent the greater part of his life in the comparatively free and open territory of Galilee. Though a petty kingdom ruled by Herod Antipas, it enjoyed a degree of political autonomy unknown to the southern province of Judea whose procurators were, for every important purpose, under the direct control of the emperor in Rome. The anti-foreign feeling was therefore much more intense in Judea than in Galilee. The

exalted marriage by making it the symbol of the union of Christ with the church. See Eph. V:25–33.

[1] Cf. such passages of Scripture as Deut. XXIV:1, Luke XVI:18, Matthew V:32, and Matthew XIX:9; and note how Matthew's Gospel, which is more ecclesiastical in its aim and character, modifies Jesus' decree against divorce as set forth in Mark X. This noticeable concession seems to have grown out of the social exigencies of the Gentile-Jewish church of the time.

Judeans, accordingly, looked with envy upon the Galileans whom, in every other respect, they contemptuously regarded as their inferiors. Jesus was aware of these antipathies, both within Palestine and toward the Roman government. He understood popular Jewish aspiration toward political independence. He himself was a true patriot.[1] He did not, however, lose sight of the distinction between principles and politics; nor did he confuse the type of strength which is inherent in human character and personality with that represented in political government. All helpful forms of legislation were regarded by him as representations of man's moral and social ideals. The ultimate voice of authority in the councils of the Kingdom is that of the sensitive and cultivated human conscience. Jesus was in no way opposed to the necessary order of political government. He was not an advocate of anarchy. Loyalty to Cæsar was not regarded by him as incompatible with faithfulness to God.[2] The function of political government, like that of all other institutions, is regulative rather than creative. It serves most ideally when it tends, in the course of the progress of history, to render itself less and less necessary. All laws and governments must change to meet the demands of the growing spirit which creates them. This spirit is the genius of every developing civilization; it is the power in the world that works for righteousness. The Christian interprets it as the spirit of Christ.

Present-day statesmanship may reasonably be expected to profit by a four-fold counsel based upon the fundamental teachings of Jesus. The first is the moral admonition to build from within. Let laws rise up as beacon lights, not as prison walls. The second is the suggestion to educate as well as legislate, remembering that obedience to law does not rise to a higher moral level than the enlightened social conscience. The third is the counsel to proceed by confidence and trust. This is the essence of the Golden Rule. Faith in persons is the basis of all helpful human relationships. Confidence begets confidence. It disarms suspicion; it creates respect; it awakens the spirit of generosity;

[1] See Matthew XV:24.
[2] Matthew XII:17.

it develops spiritual character; it fosters and promotes peace. The final word of exhortation is to place righteousness above riches, character above crowns, honesty above expediency, men above machines. The first duty of the state is to provide for the moral and spiritual development of its citizenry.

Jesus was not an ascetic. He denied neither himself nor others the right to wholesome social and recreational enjoyment. The Gospel writers [1] present him as living a strenuously active life. He himself said: "My Father worketh, and I work." Those who lightly received the call to discipleship were forced to hear his solemn challenge: "He that forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be my disciple." The story of Calvary is one of profound pathos. Jesus was indeed a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. We read in the Fourth Gospel that he wept; but no historian could write a chapter on the laughter of Jesus.

Yet it is evident that Jesus frequently revealed a desire for physical relaxation and social enjoyment. He sought rest in seasons of vacation and retirement; he accepted invitations to feasts and weddings; he welcomed the friendship of the rich and the poor, of the aristocracy and the social outcast. His bitterest enemies called him a glutton and a wine-bibber.[2] Jesus cannot be imagined as frowning upon any form of innocent recreational pastime. On the contrary, he regarded wholesome pleasure as a necessary diversion and as the encouraging sign of moral and spiritual health. He was particularly attracted by the play of the children upon the village or city streets.[3] He was fond, moreover, of humor, as is indicated by the number of instances in which he himself used it with extraordinary delicacy and success.[4]

Jesus gave no command concerning specific forms of social recreation to be either commended or avoided. We are left to infer that all questions arising out of this problem best find their

[1] Mark in particular.
[2] Luke VII:34; Matthew X:19.
[3] Luke VII:32.
[4] Read, e. g., Luke VII:40 and its context; or Luke XIII:32.

own individual answer in the choice and pursuit of a proper and worthy ideal of life. The true disciple of Jesus, whether engaged in work, in worship, or in play, will seek to imitate his Master who could say of himself: "I do always those things which are pleasing in the Father's sight."

Judged by the standard of earthly possessions, Jesus is to be numbered among the world's homeless and poor. He was one among the peasants of Galilee, a man who, except during the last short years of his life, toiled with his hands for his livelihood. At the call of God he left the carpenter's bench and forsook all possibility of a comfortable or economically independent life. In the midst of the latest and greatest period of his life he could boast of no acres or houses. He had no patronizing rich friends. He counted on no social prestige. He did not have the professional rabbinical training which lifted its possessors above want and into the class of the socially privileged. As a teacher he lived a humble lowly life, refusing, against insistent popular appeal, the public honors that held the promise of power and wealth. He said of himself: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." [1]

Yet Jesus did not despise possessions, or the men who owned them. He neither denounced wealth, nor paid it homage. He simply recognized and appreciated its potential power for good or evil. The man enticed by the lure of gold deserved, he believed, as often to be pitied as censured. To trust implicitly in riches was to become the slave of an evil passion. It was Jesus' conviction that the sacrifice demanded by the god of materialism was too great for the man who valued his soul. Riches bend the mind toward a concern for mere physical existence and well-being. They dull the moral sensibilities of men, and dry up the springs of spiritual aspiration. By them men too often lose their sense of brotherhood; all natural feeling of sympathy for their fellowmen disappears; they become anti-social, live apart in a world by themselves, and thus suffer the loss of the greater

[1] Luke IX:58.

human values that have been preserved and sanctioned by universal experience.

Jesus regarded property ownership from the point of view of its social obligations, not its individual advantages. He defined it as the responsibility to use and the opportunity to serve, in contrast with the popular assumption of the right to hold and to consume. Possession, he taught, is not absolute ownership. It is instead a trusteeship of life-long tenure. The Christian interpretation of the use of wealth centers in the concept of stewardship. As God is the giver, so He is the absolute owner of all things. Man possesses, but God owns—this fact, however variably interpreted, is the sum of Jesus' teachings, not only concerning wealth but human life. A just stewardship of life, including all earthly possessions, is the debt which men everywhere owe to God. Jesus taught, moreover, that to own is to owe: the strong man is debtor to the weak. Properly administered, wealth may thus offer a two-fold blessing: (1) it may minister socially to human welfare; (2) it may contribute to the development of individual moral character.

Do the principles of individual stewardship apply to corporate social groups? Is individual morality binding upon nations? Is brotherhood exclusively a family virtue, or does it apply to larger communities, states, nations, and races? Whatever the divergence of present-day answers to these questions, the teaching of Jesus regarding them is unmistakably clear. Jesus' use of parables containing literary hyperbole does not prove him to have been a fanatical idealist. His conception of the kingdom of God, interpreted as a world brotherhood, was no idle or fanciful dream. There is a realism in his prophetic vision, the significance of which is gradually becoming more and more apparent.

Can war ever be justified as a Christian pursuit? The answer to this question must be found in the total sum of the principles which governed Jesus' life and teachings. Some possible aid toward the solution of the problem may be offered by the following considerations.

1. Jesus has given the world its ideal of universal human

brotherhood. Human instincts converge toward social unity and solidarity. Though men make war, they fundamentally desire peace.

2. The fraternal ideal can become a reality only through the capitalized results of accumulated human experience. The road to peace is open but men and nations, who would find it and travel upon it, must be prepared to set out upon an untried adventure. They dare not fear or avoid risks. They must have the courage that faith alone can provide. Peace, too, has its price. It must be pursued. There must be a will to peace. The path to peace is the path of sacrifice. Jesus taught this truth most clearly by his own example.

3. The life of Jesus is itself proof that the virtues which peace inculcates are not merely negative. Actually it is the will to strife that negates or nullifies because it destroys. War has, to some extent, the manipulative faculty of establishing order out of primitive chaos. Peace alone, however, fosters the creative genius. The world did not come into being, as was primitively supposed, by a war of the gods. Its existence represents the utmost of both divine and human sacrifice. The ideal of peace is positive; it affirms, it is constructive, it makes demands upon heroism. There is no intrinsic virtue in violence. Jesus' injunction to love the neighbor, and then to go another step farther by loving the enemy, does not tend to inculcate moral softness or sentimentality. That noble ideal cost Jesus himself the utmost price that he could pay.

4. Peace, rather than war, is a worthy end in itself. War marks a lower stage in the process which leads to the development of races and nations. If it did not, should not nations find war more, rather than less, desirable as they advance from barbarism toward civilization? Jesus definitely taught two truths concerning the kingdom of God: (1) that it is a kingdom of peace; (2) that its coming is by the law of progress.

5. Finally, followers of Jesus are coming gradually to regard war as an offense against man's developing religious intelligence. War presupposes a conception of God that is inherently primitive. The God of Jesus is neither the war-god of the ancient

Hebrew tribesmen, nor the symbol of Israel's monarchic nationalism. He is the kind of God Whom men can love and trust; a world God; a Father-God; a God Who has made men hate strife and love peace; Who demands justice, tempered by generosity, and free from the taint of physical violence; Who seeks to build His kingdom in the lives of men through faith and not through fear. The future destiny of the world is in the hands of the disciples of the Prince of Peace.

PART VI

THE APOSTOLIC AGE

Rome
The Three Taverns
Market of Appius
Puteoli
DALMATIA
MOESIA
Illyricum
Thessalonica
MACEDONIA
Beroea
Neapolis
Amphipolis
THESSALIA
Nicopolis
SICILY
Rhegium
Syracuse
ADRIATIC
OR
IONIAN SEA
Athens
Corinth
Cenchreae
Melita
Phoenix
CLAUDA
MEDITERRANEAN
Cyrene
LIBYA
SYRTIS
THE CHRISTIAN W
IN THE
APOSTOLIC AGE—A

EUXINE SEA
THRACE
BOSPORUS
Byzantium
PROPONTIS
BITHYNIA & PONTUS
MYSIA
Troas
Adramyttium
Assos
Mytelene
Pergamos
Thyatira
PHRYGIA
GALATIA
CAPPADOCIA
AEGEAN SEA
ASIA
Sardis
Smyrna
Philadelphia
Antioch
Hierapolis
Iconium
SAMOS
Ephesus
Laodicea
Colossae
PISIDIA
Lystra
LYCAONIA
Derbe
TAURUS MTS.
CILICIA
Miletus
Pergae
Attalia
PAMPHYLIA
Tarsus
Cos
Cnidus
LYCIA
Rhodes
Patara
Myra
RHODES
Seleucia
Antioch
SYRIA
PHOENICIA
CRETE
Pr. Salmone
Lasea
Fair Havens
CYPRUS
Salamis
Paphos
SEA
Sidon
Tyre
Damascus
Ptolemais
Caesarea
Samaria
Joppa
SAMARIA
Lydda
Azotus
Jerusalem
Gaza
JUDAEA
Alexandria
ARABIA
EGYPT
Battenhouse & Leitzel

CHAPTER XXVI

THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE

The apostolic age in New Testament history extends approximately from 30 to 100 A. D. It marks the rise of Christianity and, therefore, in a religious sense, the dawn of a new world era. It forms the bridge over which civilization passed from an old to a new order. The radiating centers of this transformative influence were Palestine and Rome. As never before in its history, Rome was the acknowledged world empire. Its dominions extended eastward from the Atlantic to Mesopotamia, and from the desert of Africa northward to the isles of Britain. Obedience to its legions and its law was universal. Within its domain lived peoples of varied nationalities, races, and religions. The age was characterized by a developing freedom and cosmopolitanism. The culture of the empire was, in large part, an inheritance from the Greeks. Roman practical genius, however, came into play, and the borrowed culture was readily made adaptable to the need of the time. Greek thought and the Greek language not only survived but were preserved in the interest of utility. The policy of the empire was one of broad tolerance.

In Palestine, where the hand of Rome and, to a scarcely less degree, the mind of Greece were felt, these essentially foreign influences came into contact with a third, and this time opposing, element. Here Roman power and Greek culture were met by the piety and faith of Judaism. Jewish piety, though oppressed by the weight of a cumbersome formalism, had not lost its vitality. Continued suffering and an undying national hope had served to keep the Jews faithfully and ardently religious. Loyalty to Jehovah found outward expression among them in a passionate impulse to freedom. At their center, religion and patriotism were one. The age, accordingly, was

characteristically revolutionary. The yoke of Rome became more and more oppressive. Military leaders arose advancing the claims of Messianism. By the middle of the first century Palestine found itself gradually involved in a political rebellion. The attitude of Rome, though tolerant, was firmly against colonial insurrection. The climax came when the imperial army appeared in Palestine. Further rebellion led to the ultimate overthrow of the Jewish state, and to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D.

To the Roman, the Greek, and the Jewish influences which aided in producing the apostolic age, another, by far the greatest of them all, remains to be added. This fourth influence was the Christian gospel. The religion of Jesus and the lives and teachings of the early apostles were the first century's gift to the world. This great gift, with all that it implies, is familiarly named Christianity. The apostolic age was an age of Christian achievement. It was an age of spiritual adventure, of the pioneer impulse to evangelism, of extraordinary missionary enterprise, of noble martyrdom, of literary productivity, and, finally, of fundamental religious teaching and radical moral reform. It was a heroic age; an age of new beginnings, and one of momentous destiny.

I. PAGAN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Conditions in the Roman empire were not unfavorable to the rise and spread of the Christian faith. The law of the nation, based upon sound principles of justice, encouraged moral reform. The empire's noblest citizens, aware of the evils which were sapping its vitality and destroying its spirit, gave themselves to a united effort toward social betterment. Philosophers became preachers against moral and religious skepticism. Statesmen taught the principles of political government, laying emphasis upon the solidarity of the empire. Engineers built highways uniting the provinces in language and culture. Traveling merchants, scholars, and men of leisure encouraged the dissemination of ideas which led to cosmopolitanism and unity. Daily

life in the provinces, except for the presence of the Roman governor and his orderly legions, was reasonably independent and undisturbed. Tolerance thus inculcated prepared the way for peace.

Last and most significant of all, a new interest in religion had begun to manifest itself throughout the length and breadth of the empire. Philosophical skepticism had by this time dealt ruthlessly with the current popular mythology of the day. Its essentially negative character and ethical barrenness lay openly revealed. The religion of the state, which assumed the form of an adopted Emperor worship, and which was designed to further more completely the unification of the empire, had likewise failed to satisfy the newly awakened spiritual aspirations of the people. The call of the time was for a new type of religion. It was for a faith rising above childish credulity, and at the same time free from the blighting influences of a merely speculative metaphysics. The demand, moreover, was for a faith untrammeled by the weight of an excessive ceremonialism, or a merely utilitarian morality. It was for an emphasis (1) upon individuality in religion, (2) upon the values of mystical experience, and (3) upon the hope of immortality and the reality of the future life. The religions best prepared to meet this universal spiritual hunger were of three classes. To the first belonged the mystery cults from Persia, Egypt, Asia Minor, and Greece. The second was represented by Judaism; the third by Christianity. Each of these fulfilled its mission to the extent of its appeal to the faith of the spiritually desolate and heart-broken multitudes of an already world-weary pagan empire.

The mystery cults had originated from mythical stories concerning the gods who, in their experience of life and death, and through their subsequent immortality, symbolized the profound meaning of certain elemental facts regarding the world of nature and the problem of human existence. These cults probably began as forms of pure nature worship. Their religious conceptions, in the beginning without moral significance, were the result, first, of primitive observations of life as represented chiefly by the facts of death, the changing seasons, and natural

growth and decay; second, of the developing social consciousness; and, finally, of the instinctive and thereafter cultivated desire for individual self-preservation. Their appeal was primarily to the emotions. In their later stages of development, however, under the influence of the growing moral sense of the times, they gradually advanced to varying degrees of ethical value and refinement. Whatever their minor distinctions, these Mysteries centered about one common theme. This motivating principle found expression in the worshiper's capacity for spiritual fellowship with the deity. The symbolical act whereby such an experience was made accessible was that of secret initiation. The event wrought in the individual a kind of psychological miracle. It became the means of overcoming natural fear, of appropriating divine sympathy, of implanting and nurturing in the initiate the sense of the reality of the spiritual world, and of strengthening in him the belief in his own immortality.

The most popular of the mystery religions were the following: (1) the Eleusinian mysteries of Greece centering upon the worship of Demeter or Mother-Earth; (2) the mysteries of Mithra, which originated in Persia, and whose cult was identified with the worship of the sun; (3) the cult of Isis and Osiris whose home was in Egypt; (4) the Cybele-Attis mysteries, which came from Asia Minor, and which represented a worship of the source of life; (5) the cult of Dionysus or Bacchus, the god of wine, worshiped in the frenzy of passion or intoxication. The Græco-Roman altars to these cults were to be found almost everywhere. The worshipers represented every race and nationality. The rites differed widely. Many of them made their primary appeal to the baser human passions. For this reason the noblest minded and the educated men of the empire turned from the Mysteries, even as they felt themselves repelled by the crude polytheism of the popular current mythology. These persons of the highest aristocracy found refuge in the truth-seeking philosophies of Plato and the famous Stoics, whose lofty moral idealism and monotheistic tendency offered them individual satisfaction.

Platonism and Stoicism, however, notwithstanding their moral excellence, could not take the place of religion. Except to in-

tellectual and strong men, they were cold and uninspiring. They left even the most thoughtful in frequent perplexity. They offered no help to the weak. They taught the tranquillity of self-reliance and self-restraint rather than the peace that is born of hope and trust. There was, therefore, between the mystery religions on the one hand, and the philosophies on the other, a middle ground, a large area of human life and experience into which neither could enter and which, accordingly, neither could claim. It was the spiritual ground occupied by the prominent and practically influential middle classes of the empire,—those who established its homes, pursued its trades, traveled on its highways, defended its borders, built its cities, cultivated its soil, and otherwise sheltered and supported the population of the land. To them Judasim offered both a practical philosophy and a spiritual outlet.

II. JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

The carriers of this new and noble faith were the Jews of the Dispersion. They were, with few exceptions, traveling merchants and scholars whom the political situation in Palestine had driven to homes among the Gentiles of the Roman colonies. There, amid pagan environment, they maintained the worthy moral and religious traditions of their race. By their character, and the high quality of their racial gifts, they commended themselves at once to their Greek and Roman associates. In an incredibly short time they had established themselves in colonies at the great centers of population of the Mediterranean world. In Alexandria, in Antioch, in the cities of Asia Minor, of Macedonia and of Achaia, and in Rome itself, they were noted as scholars, as merchants, and as men of virtue and piety.

Their residence outside of Palestine had, however, its own marked effect upon these Jews of the Dispersion. They came under the influence of Roman cosmopolitanism, and especially of Greek culture. Thus they learned to be tolerant and religiously liberal minded. By contrast with the Palestinian Jews, who remained traditionally orthodox, the Hellenists—the name

by which the Greek-speaking Jews of the Dispersion gradually came to be known—were men of the world, loyal to the faith of the fathers, but acquainted with Gentile life and thought and therefore broadly sympathetic toward those of less fortunate racial and spiritual heritage.[1] By their personal example, and through their lofty religious ideals, these sons of the Dispersion fulfilled their providential mission. They were the spiritual and moral leaven in a moribund and socially disintegrating pagan world. Through them men of lofty purpose, both Greeks and Romans, became secret or openly acknowledged adherents to Judaism. Some accepting circumcision and the law, became "proselytes" or adopted members of the Jewish synagogue.[2] Others, like Cornelius, spoken of in Acts X:2, who remained outside the Jewish fold, but who worshiped God after the Jewish manner in their own homes, were known as those who "feared God."

The Jews of the Dispersion formed the bridge across which Christianity entered the Roman world. The open synagogue, already established there, offered the Christian apostles an inviting door of access to every Jewish community. There, too, the first Gentile converts declared their faith in Jesus. Paul, upon entering a new missionary field, customarily sought the synagogue as the place for his first evangelistic meetings. He was always at home in these religious and social centers of his Hellenistic brethren. They welcomed him heartily, moreover, so long as they were free from the influence of the misunderstanding and fanatical Palestinian Judaizers who persistently harassed the apostle by camping closely upon his missionary trail. The distinction between the Palestinian and the Hellenistic Jews thus became clearly noticeable. It determined, indeed, at a very early time, the future fate and course of Christianity. Primitive Christianity was essentially Jewish. Pentecost occurred

[1] Certain elements of Stoic philosophy came gradually to be intermingled with Hellenistic Judaism. Its influence upon Paul, though not dominant, is clearly noticeable. The best example of the effect of Greek thought upon the Jewish mind is the philosophy of Philo of Alexandria, who sought to reconcile the teachings of Moses with those of Plato.

[2] Literally a proselyte is a newcomer, i. e., a convert.

in Jerusalem, the city of the temple and the priests. The first Christians were faithful observers of the traditional law. Paul, on the other hand, was a Hellenist. His conversion to Christianity was the most significant event of the apostolic age. It freed the Christian gospel from a future bondage to Judaism. The legalistic disciples of Jesus were thus unintentionally instrumental in helping Christianity to become a Gentile religion, and, accordingly, at a later time, a world-wide faith.

The circumstances affecting life in the Mediterranean world during the early apostolic age may be summarized in the following statements. 1. The Græco-Roman empire was large and of undisputed sovereignty. It was well governed. It was at peace. Colonial life was comparatively undisturbed. Citizenship was cosmopolitan. 2. Commerce upon Roman roads, comparative ease and safety of travel, the universality of the Greek language and the spread of Greek philosophy and culture prepared a natural and a ready way for the spread of the Christian gospel. 3. The decay of polytheism, brought about by the growth of speculative and moral philosophy, was followed by a religious awakening and a consequent deep spiritual hunger which no amount of metaphysics, however idealistic and noble, could satisfy. 4. Emperor-worship, introduced as a formal state cult, and designed to offer an outlet for the religious emotions by elevating patriotism to the plane of divinity, was found to be equally unsatisfying. 5. The mystery religions, largely importations from the East, met an emotional need but violated the rapidly and universally developing ethical consciousness. 6. Palestinian Judaism made its contribution to the age by means of its persistent emphasis upon Messianism, its deeply spiritual though formally systematized order of worship, and its fidelity to the noble moral implications of the law. 7. Hellenistic Judaism among the Jews of the Dispersion carried the Messianic hope to the distant areas of the empire, fused into unity Jewish thought and Gentile philosophy, fostered a high ethical monotheism, practiced and taught religious tolerance, opened its synagogues to both Christians and Gentiles, and, by these services, earned for itself the distinction of being the first institution

to aid in the spread and the establishment of Christianity throughout the Roman world. 8. Of the greatest historical importance to the first century, however, was the Christian gospel itself. The apostolic age glorified the person and mission of Jesus. It gave him to the world. It marked, therefore, not merely the beginning of a revolutionary era in human history but the establishment of a new world order. It offered to humanity what it most wanted and needed,—a new, vitally dynamic practicable, and ultimately satisfying philosophy of life.

The gospel of Jesus, thus given to the world, carried in itself the assurance of a successful enterprise. At the basis of this assurance was the testimony of men whose lives had been transformed by a vision of the living Christ. Behind every victory won by the devoted apostles in the field of evangelistic conquest lay the challenging call and commission of Jesus. These heroic men did not believe themselves engaged in any mere work of religious proselyting; theirs, they realized, was the solemn task of proclaiming to all men everywhere the sublime gospel of human redemption. The prophetic urge was upon them. The words of Jesus were life, and this life was the light of men. They themselves were torch-bearers sent out into a world as yet lying in spiritual darkness. The task was theirs to hold high the torch of truth and to carry it to the ends of the earth. Apostolic history proves that they did not fail in the fulfilment of their charge. They preached the gospel first in Palestine, then in Syria; after that they carried it across Asia Minor and into Europe; finally it was taken by them to Rome itself, and, before many years, planted even in the imperial household.

III. HISTORICAL SOURCES

The story of the great missionary adventure which characterizes the apostolic age is first and best of all told in the Book of the Acts. Though not alone, this work stands supreme among the writings of New Testament history. In addition to it the following historical sources furnish a large amount of in-

formation concerning the period: (1) the letters and epistles of Paul; (2) the writings of the early church fathers;[1] (3) the works of the Jewish historian Josephus, who wrote of Jewish life in Palestine up to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, in 70 A. D.; (4) certain historical references to Christianity, or to the Christians, found in the writings of such Roman historians as Tacitus, Suetonius, and the younger Pliny; (5) the literary and other products made available through archæological study and research. The two sources which require our special attention are the Acts and the writings of Paul. Paul's letters are the earliest of the New Testament writings. Their autobiographical value is beyond comparison. Better than any other existing body of literature they reflect both the spirit of Christianity and Jewish community life in the Mediterranean world. Though of Jewish parentage, Paul's thought was steeped in Hellenism. He was likewise a Roman citizen. His cosmopolitanism, accordingly, supremely fitted him for his task. He was by both temperament and training the representative of the noblest characteristics of his age. In him were found extraordinarily well coördinated the intellectual virility and imaginativeness of the Greeks, the firm strength and practicality of the Romans, and the moral idealism and religious passion of the Hebrew. Examples of these combined elements abound in Paul's letters. Taken together, they present a realistic picture of both the inner and outer life of the people of the time.

The Pauline letters were written at stated intervals between 50 and 64 A. D. Except in the case of Galatians, their chronological order is clearly determined. A topical grouping of the writings, so listed as to fit into the time order of their composition, is somewhat difficult. The following classification, now in common use, is suggestive and satisfactory:—

I. The Preparatory Group
First and Second Thessalonians—written from Corinth in 51 A. D.

[1] Such as, e. g., the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, written from Rome in 95 A. D., and the recently discovered little book called the Didache, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, written shortly after 100 A. D

II. The Great Missionary Group
Galatians—written from Antioch in 52 A. D.
First and Second Corinthians—written from Ephesus and Macedonia in 55 A. D.
Romans—written from Corinth in 56 A. D.
III. The Prison Group
Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians—written from Rome between 59 and 61 A. D.
IV. The Pastoral Group
First Timothy and Titus—written from Macedonia in 63 A. D.
Second Timothy—written from prison in Rome in 64 A. D.[1]

The Book of the Acts is the great epic of Christianity. It stands unique in the New Testament as the only book of pure history. Like Genesis in the Old Testament, it is a book of beginnings. It was written by Luke, the author of one of the four Gospels. His aim was to tell the story of the rise of Christianity, and of its early development from a small Jewish sect to a world religion. As sacred scripture its special value lies in its noble pioneer spirit of evangelism, its realistic portraiture of strong Christian personalities, and its faithful preservation of the historical sources of early Christian doctrine. The literary structure of the book reveals that Luke was a skilled historian. He did not rely solely either upon an inspired imagination or upon traditional hearsay. He sought literary sources, examined them carefully for the required evidence, and used them with distinguishable discretion. An analysis of the Acts shows that there were, in all probability, three such authoritative sources in existence in Luke's time. The first of these may have been an old Aramaic document containing, in composite form, several originally independent records of the birth and early expansion of Christianity. This composite narrative served as the basis of

[1] It is here assumed that the Pastoral letters are from the pen of Paul. Of the nucleus of Paulinism in them there in no doubt.

Acts I–XII. The second is reflected in those portions of the remainder of Luke's history for which he was immediately indebted to the personal narrative of Paul. The third, it is apparent, was the historian's own previously written private journal. This last and most important source is easily identified in the present book of the Acts by the four so-called "we sections" which have been retained since its composition in the biblical text.[1]

A question of absorbing interest presents itself in connection with the study of the Acts. Why does this book, which begins and proceeds with such deliberateness and detail, end so abruptly? It normally introduces Paul, and carefully follows him upon his great missionary adventure; it devotes a large literary section to Paul's journey to Rome; then suddenly the narrative closes telling us nothing of the ultimate fate which so soon thereafter befell the apostle. Why this silence? Why, likewise, the silence of the author regarding the later ministry and the death of Peter? Luke's fame as a historian encourages the demand for an answer. The circumstances suggest three possible explanations. The most obvious among them is that when the historian had traced the spread of the Christian Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, he had realized his purpose, and accordingly laid down his pen. Another is that, writing at a time when Christianity was beginning to encounter Roman opposition, it was Luke's aim to conciliate this growing hostility by showing how, from its earliest days to its advent in Rome, the gospel of Jesus had found the imperial government its consistent ally.[2] Probably the truest answer to the question is to suppose that Luke did not plan that his apostolic history should end with the book of the Acts. He may have counted on the preparation of a third volume setting forth the further fortunes and victories of Christianity in the Roman empire. From present day

[1] These sections are:—Chapter XVI:10–17; Chapter XX:5–15; Chapter XXI:1–18; and XXVII:1–XXVIII:16.

[2] If Luke wrote his Gospel and the Acts between the years 80 and 85 A. D., it was at a time when the Roman opposition, though not yet violent, was beginning to assert itself. This opposition continued to gain ground until it ripened into a persecution of the Christians under the emperor Domitian shortly after 90 A. D.

knowledge we are not in a position to infer that such a book was actually written.

IV. ROMAN EMPERORS

Thirteen emperors ruled in Rome during the first Christian century. They were the following:—

Augustus—31 B. C.–14 A. D.
Tiberius—14–37 A. D.
Caligula—37–41 A. D.
Claudius—41–54 A. D.
Nero—54–68 A. D.
Galba, Otho, and Vitellius—68–69 A. D.
Vespasian—69–79 A. D.
Titus—79–81 A. D.
Domitian—81–96 A. D.
Nerva—96–98 A. D.
Trajan—98–117 A. D.

Augustus, who established the empire, gave peace and order to the Roman world. His reign came to be known as the Golden Age. Tiberius, his step-son, was gloomy and morose. Tacitus, the Roman historian, pictured his rule in such a way as to make his name an odium for all time. Yet, outside of Rome, his government seems to have been marked by fairness and wisdom. Caligula became emperor too early in his life. He developed almost at once into a tyrant. Thereafter he became the wretched victim of his own dissipation. Then followed insanity. All Rome was glad when he was slain. Claudius was chosen by the soldiers, who slew Caligula, as the feeblest man who could be found to hold the imperial office. The chance, however, did not serve to bring ill fortune to the empire. The reign of Claudius was fairly successful. The most important event of his rule was the conquest and colonization of Britain.[1] He was poisoned by his fourth wife, the evil Agrippina, who desired the throne for her son Nero.

[1] In 43 A. D.

Nero began his rule with fair moderation. During his early years the power of the empire was in the hands of the philosopher Seneca, and of Burrhus, the commander of the Roman guard. After a short time, however, Nero himself determined to assert his authority. He began with the murder of his mother, who probably deserved no better treatment. Then he murdered his wife. Thereafter he began his persecution of the Christians. In 64 A. D. a fire occurred in Rome which raged for ten days. It reduced about one half of the city to ashes. The report was that Nero himself had ordered the conflagration, but the blame for it was placed upon the Christians. Tradition records that both Paul and Peter suffered martyrdom at this time. A revolt at last put an end to the reign of brutality. In desperation, rather than surrender to the Roman soldiery and guard, after having been condemned to death by the Senate, Nero took his own life.

Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, who followed to the throne in rapid succession, are little more than names representing a period of bloody revolution. They were followed by Vespasian whose rule of ten years was marked by firmness and strength. He was a soldier who had risen from the peasant population. He gave the empire the kind of disciplinary government it just then needed. It was an unfortunate time, therefore, for the Palestinian colony which, because of irritating local circumstances, found itself drawn into a fateful revolt.[1] Vespasian was succeeded by Titus who had been the Syrian general of the Roman army in the campaign against Palestine. His reign was considerately just and benevolent. It is associated in history with the tragic eruption of Mt. Vesuvius which resulted in the burial of the ancient cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Domitian, the brother of Titus, was a cruel tyrant. He made himself the bitter enemy of the Senate, which, after suffering for a season the outrage of his infamous acts, ordered his name to be erased from all public monuments. He is remembered in New Testament history for his unreasoning and relentless persecution of the Christians. His reign furnishes, on the pagan

[1] This rebellion led to the destruction of Jerusalem, in 70 A. D.

side, the historical background for the scenes depicted in the late first century book of Revelation.

With Nerva and Trajan the history of the empire entered upon a new era. It became an era of wise and beneficent rulership by a succession of capable and honorable men. Nerva occupied the throne for only a little more than a year. Trajan, like Vespasian, was a soldier. He was a native of Spain, the first of the Cæsars to have come from the provinces. History associates him with the vast conquests of the Roman empire in the East. Under him, too, according to a letter written by the younger Pliny [1] to the emperor, many Christians suffered martyrdom. The cause of their suffering was at this time, however, purely political. There appears to have been no popular hatred toward them. Their only guilt was that they steadfastly refused to offer sacrifice to the Roman gods. In every other respect Pliny finds them exemplary citizens. Following the calumny heaped upon them in the days of Nero, this pagan governor's vindication of their moral character pays them a sublime and well deserved tribute. The reply of Trajan, which has also been preserved, does likewise. His request was that no Christian be openly persecuted. There was to be no hunger for revenge, no thirst for Christian blood. Legal accusation and conviction were to precede each case of punishment. Pagan prejudice and cruelty still survived; but the Christians were at last beginning to be recognized and to be morally free.

[1] Pliny the Younger was then governor of Pontus in Asia Minor. The letter was written c. 112 A. D.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE EARLY APOSTOLIC CHURCH

THE first Christians were content simply to be regarded as Jewish followers of Jesus. As the apostles of the new Messianic movement they immediately and eagerly acknowledged their indebtedness to Judaism. They rejoiced that the faith of their fathers had at last borne its long desired fruit. It was natural that they should claim Jesus somewhat restrictedly for themselves and for their race. They remembered Jesus' own declaration that he had come first of all to bring salvation to the house of Israel. It was recalled by them that he had not, throughout his earthly life, set foot off the soil of Palestine. His opposition to the appointed Jewish leaders had been on the ground of their perverted religious and moral ideals. There was in his entire teaching no note of contempt for the Mosaic law. The disciples themselves had been trained to piety in typical Jewish homes. Except for the spiritual background which such a training afforded, Jesus' call to them could have met with no ready response. Even the life of Jesus himself reflected, at almost every point, his rich racial and religious heritage. The early Christians at first differed from their brethren in Judaism only in their belief that Jesus was the Messiah. They lived in the tranquil joy of a hope turned to realization. Fulness of life was theirs, not as a far-off promise, but as an immediate possession. To them the gospel of Jesus was the historical climax in the prolonged process of divine revelation. The distinctive element in the faith of primitive Christianity was the consciousness of the continued presence of Jesus. Jesus was alive and had revealed himself to them. They had seen his face and heard his voice. He was a reality to them, more vitally perceived and more transformatively effective in their lives than when he dwelt

with them in the days of his flesh. As now, so then, the difference between Judaism and Christianity was Jesus.

I. THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH

The experience which gave birth to the first disciples' faith had come upon them unexpectedly. Jesus' death on the cross had seemed to end all hope. No way was open but the lonely paths to their abandoned occupations. No companionship was theirs save their doubts and fears. The redemption of Israel had once more only been predicted. Hope had risen to ardent expectation, only to be shattered by the apparently ruthless fatefulness of historical events. Then had come the first Easter morning with its sudden change. The resurrection had been followed by visions of the living Lord. Jesus was indeed the Messiah. With swift resolution they again turned their footsteps toward Jerusalem. It was there that he had fulfilled his Messianic mission as Jehovah's suffering servant. There, accordingly, must his followers first bear witness to the risen Christ. As their thoughts took the form of the apocalyptic hope then current among the Jews, they came almost at once to believe that Jerusalem, too, was the place at which Jesus would manifest himself after his sudden and glorious return to earth. Zion would thus become the center of the newly established Messianic kingdom. The advent of Christ would usher in a new era of universal peace and good will. This era, when fully established, would be the beginning of the complete and never-ending rule of God upon earth.

The ascension of Jesus, witnessed by the disciples, carried with it a deep and lasting significance. It was in essence a realization of the boundless transcendence of Christ. The company of his followers saw Jesus lifted up far above Palestine and become the world's saviour. They heard his command to tell the good news, which had once been proclaimed to them in Galilee, to all the living sons of men. Christian discipleship was thus suddenly transformed for them into the ideal of a universal human brotherhood.

Of the implications of their apostolic commission the Eleven

had at first no adequate conception. Their religious background and their outlook into the future were Jewish. Age-old racial conceptions hung as dark curtains before their eyes. They were, in reality, setting out upon an adventure for which they were as individuals not fully equipped. It was not within the power of Palestinian Judaism to set Christianity free. What, however, Judaism lacked in universality it more than made up in racial intensity. The primitive Christians did not attain fame for their religious tolerance. The wall about Jerusalem was symbolical of their narrow provincial outlook. Nevertheless their faith was possessed of sufficient spiritual vitality to express itself in the founding of a church so dynamic as to rise out of its traditional groove and, overleaping all geographical boundaries, to commend itself, as an originally Jewish sect, to the entire Roman world. It was a faith capable of transforming men because it was itself gradually being transformed from a Jewish Messianism to a universally redemptive and historically progressive world religion. Hellenistic Christianity was the first marked step in this providential progress toward development.[1] It was of their possession of a great and dynamic source of spiritual vitality, of a faith suddenly made radiant and real, of a hope become concrete and converted into sight, of heaven come down to earth, that the first apostles found themselves to be all-absorbingly and sublimely conscious. They had become as men suddenly transformed into angels, messengers of good news. The spirit of God had come upon them, even the spirit promised by the prophet Joel.[2] A great day had dawned. Humanity was now to be universally blessed. The human race was to become a family of prophets and prophetesses. The promise of Pentecost had been fulfilled.

Pentecost of olden times had signaled the commemoration of the completion of a plentiful harvest. It had been a festival of ingathering, the symbol of nature's bounty and blessing.

[1] The Hellenistic Christians were the Greek-speaking Jews who lived outside of Palestine and who became converts to Christianity. The greatest among them was Saul of Tarsus, afterward called Paul.

[2] Cf. Acts II:16–21 with Joel II:28–32.

Later, in Old Testament history, it had come to represent the origin and giving of the Mosaic law. Now suddenly it became the day of the special and complete advent of the Holy Spirit. What Jesus had promised had occurred. He himself had returned and was spiritually present among his faithful followers. The history of the Christian church had actually begun. It had been born of prayer and social spiritual fellowship. Presently religious devotion transformed itself into action. Peter, representing the entire company of consecrated and spirit-filled disciples, arose to bear witness to the advent of the new era. In his message he struck at once the key-note of all later Christian evangelism. It was the consciousness of the truth that Jesus was alive and that God had chosen him to be the saviour of mankind. Jesus' death and resurrection were in the order of a divine providence. Through them the love of God had revealed itself in infinite self-sacrifice and in transcendent power. Faith in Jesus was thereafter to be expressed, not merely in doctrine, but in spiritual experience. The test of conversion was to be the possession of the spirit of Jesus.[1] At the basis of the new spiritual life lay a disposition to repentance. The Holy Spirit was thus conceived as morally regenerative. The whole purpose of Pentecost was to elevate and transform spiritual experience into a motivating power for Christian evangelism.[2] The significance of the event lay in the ingathering of the three thousand souls which formed the nucleus of the newly originated church.[3]

II. THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

A study of early Christianity includes an interpretation, first, of its faith; second, of its social and community life. The primitive church was not primarily an institution. It was a social and

[1] Cf. here Romans VIII:9 with Acts II, and note how Paul's teaching is a commentary on the sermon of Peter.

[2] Acts I:8, which presents the thesis of the book of the Acts, makes this clear.

[3] The state of ecstasy represented by the speaking with tongues—i. e., the phenomenon of glossolalia—was not uncommon in an age familiar with the mystery religions. To Luke, viewing the incident in the light of his own time, it seemed symbolically prophetic of the coming age of the universal Christian church.

religious brotherhood. It owed its existence to two facts: its fellowship, and its faith. The earliest Christian creed is clearly summed up in the two memorable inaugural discourses of Peter.[1] One of these was delivered on the day of Pentecost; the other a little later from the porch of Solomon's temple. Taken together, their teachings center about five principal truths. They are these: (1) Jesus is the Christ, or, to use the language of the Old Testament, the promised and expected Messiah; (2) he suffered death, as the chosen and obedient servant of God, in order to redeem the world from sin;[2] (3) God Himself raised him from the dead and made him the prince of life; (4) he lives and gives his spirit to those who, through faith and repentance, have received the forgiveness of their sins and become the adopted sons of God; (5) his place is now at the exalted right hand of God, but he is coming again to be the judge of the world, to establish his complete kingdom upon earth, and to rule forever in the hearts and consciences of men.

This simple testimony of apostolic faith had its origin in the memory of a historical and personal acquaintance with Jesus. As disciples they had heard from Jesus' lips the teachings later recorded in the Gospel narratives. They had themselves witnessed his miracles. Best of all, they had come to know and to love Jesus himself. Their faith was, accordingly, not merely in a creed but in a person. Jesus had not only taught them the truth; he had given them himself. Peter and his associates, moreover, did not undertake to preach sermons after the manner of the Stoic philosophers. They were content to be living witnesses to the Messianic character of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus.[3] Again, Jesus was more, even, than a Messiah to them; he was their master and Lord.[4] Their lives were his both for intimate friendship and for self-sacrifice. His was the promise and the impartation of power; theirs the

[1] Acts II:14–40; and Acts III:12–26.

[2] See Isaiah LIII.

[3] The sermons of the Stoics were well-ordered philosophical discourses. Often they were dissertations or sermonic essays.

[4] "Jesus is Lord," was the solemn pronouncement which attended the sacred baptismal service of the primitive church.

pledge to whole-hearted and resolute loyalty. Thus, with Christ working through them in the person of the Holy Spirit, they were to establish the kingdom, to build the church against which no power of evil was to prevail. In short, Christianity, in the minds even of its earliest adherents, was regarded as standing upon the threshold of a great world enterprise. Its most distinctive characteristics were its joyous religious fellowship and its evangelistic passion. The one expressed itself in its community life; the other represented the Christian community to the outside world. Taken together, they reveal the intensive and the extensive functions of apostolic religion.

Luke, supremely skilled in the art of literary portraiture, has given us, in a single paragraph, a vivid conception of the customary social life of the early Christian church.[1] The paragraph is a masterpiece of brief descriptive information. What we learn from it throws light upon five aspects of this primitive state of Christian society. The first concerns itself with the teaching of the apostles. Religious authority was no longer purely Jewish. The voice of Peter equaled that of the best tradition of the Pharisees. The words of Jesus were placed side by side with the law of Moses.

The second aspect of this community life refers to the newly adopted form of worship. The age-old temple sacrifice was not allowed to go unobserved. The first Christians remained loyal Jews. More and more, however, their daily gatherings for religious worship took on a new significance. The places of meeting were the disciples' own homes. There they met for the meal of glad fellowship and for the exchange of words of encouragement and comfort. Being glad and praising God became a daily habit. Associated with this regular meeting for companionship and prayer was the newly adopted custom known as the breaking of bread. This custom was of hallowed origin. Jesus himself had been its founder. It commemorated his own sufferings and death and pledged the Christian believer to a life of consecrated loyalty. It became, moreover, a sacred bond uniting the disciples in mystical fellowship, both with Jesus their Lord and with one

[1] Acts II:41–47.

another. Very early it became the Christian sacrament familiar to us as the Holy Communion or Lord's Supper. It was at first celebrated daily; later, on the first day of the week. The day itself, accordingly, became known as the Lord's Day. Usually the Lord's Supper was preceded by the common meal of fellowship, called the Agapé or Love-Feast, in which rich and poor, apostles and converts, joined in a religious service of song and prayer or sacred benediction.[1]

Life in the apostolic community was further characterized by the occurrence of spiritual signs and wonders. The faith of the early Christians was itself the greatest miracle. The grace of God was strongly manifest in the acts and words of these devoted followers of Jesus. The power of healing, as well as of prophecy, seems to have fallen particularly upon Peter. Pentecost had wrought in him a marvelous work of recreation. The Holy Spirit was mightily upon him. He had, at last, become the man of granite strength that Jesus believed he would some time be. So radiantly did the spirit of Jesus henceforth shine in him, and work through him, that even the shadow that he cast performed its holy ministry of healing.

The early Christians were brothers in giving. To them fellowship in Christ meant mutual burden-bearing. Life in the church was patterned closely after the family. The strong were debtors to the weak. The church, however, was not, strictly speaking, a communistic society. Luke's reference to the social ownership of possessions was intended by him to be a statement of broad generalization.[2] It represented the ideal which, in his opinion, the primitive Christian community sought to attain. The early historical source upon which Luke depended for his narrative does not, upon close analysis, give the impression of such an original communism. We note, for example, that Mary, the mother of Mark, remained in possession of her home after the

[1] See I Cor. XI. When, in the time of Paul, pagan social customs led to the abuse of the Agapé, it was gradually separated from the Holy Communion. In the day of Pliny—115 A. D.—the Communion was observed in the morning, the Agapé in the evening.

[2] Acts II:44–45. Luke's Gospel reveals, even to the casual reader, certain strong and, in themselves, noble tendencies toward communism.

days of Pentecost.[1] Peter, moreover, is explicit in his statement to Ananias and Sapphira that they were under no binding obligation to dispose of their property; nor were they compelled to put all the money received for it into the church treasury. Their sin was an act of flagrant moral deception, not one of anti-communistic revolt. Again, Barnabas' free gift of his property was wholly spontaneous; it was an act of generosity which others very properly sought to emulate. The motive which prompted the entire enterprise was not toward the accumulation of social wealth, but toward Christian philanthropy. Through their gifts they expressed their brotherly desire to help one another. Christian love was through them given a true interpretation in terms of self-sacrifice.

Last and most important of all, the early church was marked by an extraordinary spiritual vitality. It became at once a living church. It gave proof that Jesus was alive by its joyous spiritual fellowship and its unbounded evangelistic passion. The keynote of its worship was praise. The peace and happiness of the newly added converts deeply stirred the hearts of the original apostolic band. Pentecost repeated itself. The place of community worship was shaken by the conscious presence of the Holy Spirit.[2] Witnesses to the scenes enacted there were moved mightily by the demonstrated fact that Christ himself was present in the signs and wonders wrought through his disciples. Believers multiplied, first by the hundreds, then into the thousands. The era of Christian evangelism had dawned. The gospel of Jesus had definitely set out upon its conquest of the world.

In its earliest period the Christian community was left outwardly all but undisturbed. Upon two occasions, it is true,[3] a mild hostility asserted itself; Peter and his apostolic associates were brought to trial before the Jewish authorities; the cases against them were investigated; they were found daringly, and with trenchant speech, but blamelessly, to have been prophesying in the name of Jesus. Both trials, wanting altogether

[1] Acts XII:12.
[2] Acts IV:31.
[3] Acts IV:1–22 and V:17–42.

in destructive evidence, resulted in the apostles' dismissal. Their real consequence, according to Luke, was a renewed religious revival. The gospel was given ever greater and greater liberty. Friends, like the sane and sympathetic Gamaliel, offered it protection. The opposition to Peter's discourses had come chiefly from the aristocratic Sadducees whose general lack of popularity helped, rather than hindered, the Christian cause.[1] The apostles' participation in the temple worship helped to secure for them, temporarily at least, popular Jewish good will.

Life in the mother church thus continued joyfully and peacefully. Reception of membership was accompanied by a public religious testimony and by the rite of baptism. The sacrament, at first, was simple. Its symbolism had the significance of a spiritual rebirth. The confession was simply one of faith in the risen Christ. Ordinarily, those who had passed through the experience of a public confession had the consciousness of being saved. Salvation was not merely a hope awaiting fulfilment after death; it was a joyous present possession, made real and abiding through the gift and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The earthly cares of the first Christians were few. Their sorrows were mitigated by the expectant hope of the early return of Jesus. A kindly providence guarded the church in its infancy. It was shielded from harm until the time when, with developed strength, it could meet persecution as a supreme challenge, and not as a deadly blow to its faith. That crucial time was, indeed, not long delayed. When it arrived the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church.

III. EARLY CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM

Traced from the martyrdom of Stephen, apostolic history falls into two general periods. The first is the period of Christianity's gradual emancipation from Judaism; the second, the period of its progressive development from a Palestinian society to a world religion. The principal reason for the ready expan-

[1] Peter, in proclaiming the risen Christ, preached the doctrine of the resurrection, —a doctrine rejected by the Sadducees, but accepted by the Pharisees.

sion of Christianity lay in the movement itself. The prime strength of the church was the liberalizing and recreating influence of the free spirit of Jesus. Religion, especially among the Jews, was not in need of further intensification. Rather it required an outlet. This outlet was found in Christian evangelism. Hellenistic Judaism offered Christianity its great missionary opportunity. The martyrdom of Stephen opened the door to the untried enterprise. Thereafter, as upon wings, the gospel message began its journey to the ends of the earth.

Stephen was appointed as an administrator, but he was called to be an evangelist. He found his work awaiting him in the Hellenistic synagogues in Jerusalem. There, where traveling Jews from every part of the Mediterranean world met to worship and to study the law, the young deacon undertook to preach Jesus. The effect of his words was fateful. None could withstand his oratory and his argument. His message was a plea for a new type of religious worship, one in which the spiritual experience of the worshiper, and not the temple ritual, should be the dominating factor. After the manner of a prophet, apparently of the Alexandrine school, he offered his hearers an interpretation of the meaning of Hebrew history. He regarded the story of Israel as the record of a progressive divine revelation culminating in the person and message of Jesus. The listening Jews, liberal though they were, found such an analysis of Scriptural history unendurable. Stephen did not live to complete his address. As the stones hurled by the mob fell upon him, his face became radiant with a vision of Jesus. Saul of Tarsus, who witnessed the scene, was discovering that the disciples of Christ could die as nobly and as joyfully as they lived.

What the persecutors had designed to be the end of Christian evangelism, proved but a providentially new beginning. Those who fled from Jerusalem to escape further terror did not forget the reason for their flight. Its explanation to those among whom they sojourned led to a natural continuance of the stream of gospel information. The first evangelistic efforts in the now widened field were among the people of Samaria. The pioneer missionary was Philip. His message centered upon

Jesus, the Messiah, and the immediate coming of the kingdom of God. The Samaritans responded in a gratifying manner. As in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, the converts were many. The power of the gospel manifested itself especially in the regeneration of those possessed of unclean or evil spirits.[1] The chief note in Philip's evangelistic message was joy. His work received the apostolic sanction when Peter and John went up to Samaria and laid hands of blessing upon the newly admitted Christian believers.[2] Thereafter the two apostles themselves preached the gospel in the villages of Judea and Samaria, while Philip, called southward toward the ancient city of Gaza, encountered on his way the Ethiopian eunuch and led him into the Christian fold.[3]

The tenth chapter of the Acts represents an important turning point in apostolic history. With it Luke enters upon his account of the origin of Gentile Christianity. The order of transition in the narrative background is from Jerusalem, first to Cæsarea, and then to Antioch. After that the gospel is taken, first to Galatia, then to Macedonia and Achaia; thereafter to Asia, and, at last, to Rome. Two apostolic characters figure prominently in the period which separates Palestinian from Roman Christianity. They are Peter and Barnabas.[4] The stories of Peter's ministry in Lydda and Joppa, and especially his experience in the house of Cornelius, the centurion, fittingly illustrate the manner in which the disseminated truths of the Christian gospel took root in receptive Gentile soil. They reveal that, in its gradual emancipation from Judaism, Christianity was not in danger of forsaking the pure simplicity and

[1] I. e., the victims of base superstition and moral degeneracy.

[2] See Deut. XXIV:9 and Numbers XXVII:18. The laying on of hands symbolized the imparting of a special blessing upon the individual person. The sign by means of which the early Christian converts gave evidence of their possession of the Holy Spirit was very generally an outburst of ecstatic praise known as speaking with tongues.

[3] Ethiopia was the territory immediately to the south of Egypt. The Candace were the queens who ruled in Meroe, the region above the second cataract of the Nile. There is a tradition that the Ethiopian Eunuch, after his conversion, became the founder of the Christian church in Abyssinia.

[4] According to Luke, Peter is associated with Jewish Christianity; Philip with the gospel among the Samaritans; Barnabas with the Christians at Antioch, and Paul with evangelism in the empire.

evangelistic fervor of its Pentecostal days. Gradually it became clear to these early missionaries that paganism, despite its barbaric social customs and superstitions, did not present insuperable barriers to the progress of the gospel. It was legalistic Judaism, instead, that threatened to become a real hindrance to the further expansion of the church.

Peter reluctantly, and only gradually, came to a full realization of this fact. The change wrought in him was typical of the experience of the early church. For a loyal Jew the change from the law to the gospel was, after all, not an easy one. The assumption of primitive Christianity was that only adherents to Judaism were eligible to the spiritual blessings conditioned upon a living faith in Jesus. The first Christians were content to regard themselves as simply an inner circle of religious communicants. Round about them there was the same social wall which, since Nehemiah's day, had both protected and isolated them from a Gentile world. Now suddenly, from within, this four-century-old wall of Judaism had yielded to the irresistible missionary spirit of the apostolic church. Peter's reply, when he was rather severely brought to task for his leniency with Cornelius, in permitting him to be baptized into the Christian faith without the ceremony of his previous adoption into Judaism, was as indicative of the great apostle's natural prejudicial helplessness as of his Christian sincerity and courage. He said: "Who was I that I could withstand God?" [1] Faith in Jesus was setting men free in spite of themselves.

The record of Luke makes it clear that, beginning with this time, the future leadership of the Christian movement was in the hands of the Hellenists.[2] The first among them to become outstanding was Barnabas, a native of the Island of Cyprus. He was a Jew of Levitical descent and known to be a "good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." Barnabas was the pioneer sent by the Jerusalem church to proclaim the gospel in Antioch.

[1] Acts XI:17. Note how much space Luke gives to the Cornelius incident in Acts X–XI. Cf., as another example, Acts IX, XXII, and XXVI which are parallel accounts of Paul's conversion. The two incidents represent crises in apostolic history. Both record spiritual deliverances from Judaism.

[2] I. e., the Greek-speaking Jews who had been converted to the Christian faith.

This act proved of very great historical significance. Barnabas found the people of Antioch eager to hear of Christ. The work there grew with astonishing rapidity. Help firmly and permanently to establish it was urgently needed. The first person to come to the aid of his leadership was Lucius, a native of Cyrene.[1] Even then the field of evangelistic harvest was beyond the strength of the reapers. In the emergency Barnabas thought of Paul. Saul of Tarsus, as he was then known, had become a convert to Christianity and had at this time for several years been a missionary among the people of his own native province of Cilicia. His work there had been eminently successful and rich in experience.[2] Word concerning it had at this crucial time reached Barnabas. Paul was, as the records indicate, no longer a stranger to Barnabas.[3] Both were Hellenists and had probably, during the brief interval of their association in Jerusalem, become intimate friends.

By the time Barnabas and Paul had spent a year together at Antioch, the disciples in that cosmopolitan city had attracted wide attention. Instead of simply being regarded, by the observing Gentile population of the city, as Nazarenes—as the Jews there regarded them—they began to be called Christians.[4] The name, which may at first have been applied in mild derision, was accepted with honor. It gave evidence that Christianity as a world movement had definitely begun. Antioch was henceforth to be the great missionary center. From it gifts of money were to go to Jerusalem for the support of the struggling mother church; within it a new genius of evangelism was to rise, and to find expression in the subsequent missionary campaigns of Barnabas and Paul.

The birth of the church at Antioch was hastened by the travail of a new Christian persecution. The scattering of the

[1] Acts XIII:1.

[2] See Cor. XI:23–27.

[3] See Acts IX:27 and Gal. I:18.

[4] The original and more correct name was Christiani,—or, as the Sinaitic manuscript gives it, Chrestianoi. Probably through close association with the Greek term Chrestos, meaning "worthy," the name whereby the Antiochian Christians were known was Chrestiani. Cf. the French Chrétien.

Hellenist Christians, following the martyrdom of Stephen, had been succeeded by a decade of comparative quiet. During this time the Jerusalem Christians, wishing to avoid further outbreak against themselves in the city, had come gradually to adopt an increasingly conciliatory attitude toward Judaism. In the spring of 44 A. D., however, a new crisis presented itself. It came as the result of a caprice of Herod Agrippa I, the barbarous and profligate son of Herod the Great. Agrippa, following a dissolute and criminal career, had been made king of the united territory of Palestine.[1] While living and acting throughout as a pagan, he audaciously undertook to pose as a champion of Pharisaism. His attack upon the Christians was intended by him, in part at least, to please the leaders of this sect. The two apostles chosen to be his first victims were Peter and James.[2] The story of the martyrdom of James is told at length by the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius.[3] Peter was put into prison; but on the night before his trial, which was no doubt intended to result in his execution, he miraculously escaped. As in the case of Elijah and of Daniel,[4] the apostle's deliverance was effected through the timely intervention of an angel of the Lord. Who, among Peter's friends, acted in this capacity of a divine servant, it is not intimated. When Peter found himself a free man, he first reported his escape to his friends in the house of Mary, and then left Jerusalem. Luke does not name the place to which he went. It must have been outside the jurisdiction of Herod. The most likely place to go was Antioch.[5]

The persecution was cut short by the sudden death of Herod. His terrible end was very justly regarded as a divine judgment upon his criminal and blasphemous life. Thereafter Judea once

[1] Claudius made him king in the year of his accession as emperor of Rome, i. e., in 41 A. D.

[2] James, the brother of John, known as one of the two sons of Zebedee.

[3] Euseb. H. E. II:9.

[4] See I Kings XIX:5; Daniel III:25–28, and VI:22.

[5] It is assumed by many scholars that Peter's ministry at Joppa, and later in Cæsarea in the house of Cornelius, is to be dated after his release from prison—i. e., that, for the sake of the historical continuity, Acts XII is to be placed before Acts X–XI. The date of Herod's persecution appears to be 44 A. D.; while the famine, recorded in Acts XI:27, occurred in 46 A. D.

more came under the government of a Roman procurator. The church again resumed its normal life. Nevertheless, life in the Jerusalem community did not quite return to its former state of tranquillity. Peter was again allowed to return; but the death of James wrought a decided, even if at first scarcely perceptible, change. It came as a shock to the now broken apostolic circle which had expected Jesus' return to earth while they all were still alive. The shock necessitated a spiritual and theological adjustment. The thought of the apostles was influenced, moreover, by the continued, though not now aggressive, Pharisaic hostility. This hatred had not been hard to bear in the days of eager expectancy for the immediate return of Jesus. By now, however, nearly fifteen years had passed since Pentecost, and the expectation of the first disciples was being put to a strong test. The opening of new mission fields among the Gentiles tended of itself to dim the vision of this early apocalyptic hope. The total effect of these circumstances, as they concerned the primitive Palestinian church, was the gradual adoption of a more conciliatory attitude toward Judaism. Accordingly, when the storm of persecution had partially subsided, the church at Jerusalem found itself at the beginning of a new period. It was no longer the original community of the followers of Jesus. Time and Judaistic influences had contributed to remold it into a religious institution, patterned more and more after the requirements of the synagogue, depending for its spiritual sustenance increasingly upon the two-century old apocalyptic hope, and preparing itself, under the new leadership of James,[1] to assume a position of orthodoxy and of judiciary prestige with which, in after years, the apostle Paul found it necessary and, at times, rather difficult to deal.

Despite its limitations, however, Palestinian Christianity preserved one gift of incalculable worth to the church of after times. That gift was the memory of the life and teachings of Jesus as recorded in the earliest collective writings of the apostles. To an age that was fast becoming theological, this contribution proved to be of the utmost historical importance. It saved the

[1] James was surnamed the Just, and was the eldest of the four brothers of Jesus.

personality of Jesus from obscurity or permanent burial beneath the metaphysics, the moral philosophies and the mystical cults of the centuries. It protected the church against the development of a Christianity without contact with the life and person of Jesus its founder.

CHAPTER XXVIII

PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES

Apostolic history centers in the main upon one character. The personality of Paul dominates the age. It is reflected in nearly one half of the writings of the New Testament. The influence of its natural grace and spiritual power is everywhere present. Paul stands supreme among the Christian teachers of all time. He was the first century's matchless interpreter of the Christian faith, its noblest and most heroic missionary pioneer, its markedly talented literary genius, and the most worthy and outspoken representative of its moral and spiritual idealism. Paul's greatest contribution to the world was his gift of himself. Present-day interest in him is human rather than theological. It concerns itself less with the apostle's doctrines than with his deeds. Our own age derives more inspiration from his personal devotion to Christ than from a literal acceptance of his adopted creed. Paul was a religious genius. The debt Christianity owes to him is incalculable; so also is his gift to western civilization. Historically his supreme achievement was to bring the one into contact with the other. He found Christianity a retrogressive Jewish sect; he made it a world religion.

Paul's equipment for his task was the best his age could offer. Four factors,—race, geographical and social environment, early education, and a revolutionary religious experience,—contributed to make him a prepared man. He was born a Jew; he was a Roman citizen; his cultural training was broadly cosmopolitan. He was acquainted with Greek thought, with the mystery religions of the time, and with the Greek language. The distinctly notable event of his life was his Christian conversion. This experience provided him with a spiritual dynamic

for his entire later career. His whole ministry thereafter was an offering of self-sacrificing love for the glorification of Christ. Native endowment, Greek scholarship, and rabbinical learning were laid on the altar of a pure and passionate devotion to Jesus. The vision on the way to Damascus transformed Saul of Tarsus into the humble and obedient Paul. The legalistic Pharisee became the Christian saint.

I. PAUL'S YOUTH AND EARLY EDUCATION

The life of Paul divides itself naturally into four periods. The first represents the thirty years of his youth and Hebrew training. The second comprises the twelve years of his missionary apprenticeship, of which three were spent in retirement in Arabia, seven in Tarsus and the surrounding territory of Cilicia and Syria, and two in Antioch. The third was the period of his three missionary campaigns which required nine years. They may be subdivided as follows: a journey into Galatia, lasting two years; another into Macedonia and Achaia, requiring three years; and a final campaign in the provinces of Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia, covering a period of four years. The fourth and last period of Paul's life centers in two seasons of imprisonment: one in Cæsarea, lasting two years; and another in Rome continuing for a similar period. Between these two imprisonments falls the year required for Paul's journey to Rome. There is a more than slight probability that, after spending two years in the Roman prison, he was allowed his freedom for a short journey to Spain, which was followed by another and final visit to Macedonia; after which he was again arrested, thrust into a Roman dungeon, and, a little later, martyred in the tenth year of the reign of the emperor Nero.[1]

Paul spent his youth principally in two cities. They were Tarsus, the place of his birth, and Jerusalem.[2] His entire early

[1] According to the most adaptable chronological table, the dates for the four periods of Paul's life are these: (1) 5–35 A. D.; (2) 35–47 A. D.; (3) 47–56 A. D.; (4) 56–61 A. D.

[2] His years in Jerusalem were probably those between 20 and 26 A. D. The public ministry of Jesus began in 27 A. D. Paul seems, according to the record, not to have been in earthly acquaintance with Jesus.

biography may be written around these two geographical centers. Out of one came all the properties of physical strength and individual culture which people owe to their native soil. To the other, Paul, the vigorously intellectual man and cultured Roman citizen, owed the spiritual graces and the moral power which, in after years, were to make him the stalwart champion and prophetic exponent of the human soul. From the hills and highways of Cilicia he heard the call of the world; in Palestine, among the mountains, crowned by the ancestral city and its sacred temple, he listened to the voice of prophetic teaching and felt the presence of God. Tarsus imparted to young Paul the outlook of the cosmopolitan; Jerusalem opened for him the windows of heaven.

The years of Paul's boyhood are shrouded in the mystery of silence. Out of the background of a fragmentary knowledge two facts project themselves. The one relates to the deep religious piety of his childhood home; the other refers to his free-born Roman citizenship. Tarsus was a Roman free city of metropolitan rank. It was noted for both its advantageous location and its renowned past. It was situated on the Cydnus river, twelve miles inland from the Mediterranean. Travelers by sea from the east and the west made it a frequent stopping-place on their journeys in behalf of commerce or culture. Travelers by land, finding themselves on the road leading—by the way of the noted Cicilian Gates—through the Taurus mountains, invariably paid it a visit. Famous men had found temporary residence in it in past years. Cicero, while governor of Cilicia, in 50 B. C., had lived there. Tarsus, moreover, was a university city. As a center of learning and culture it ranked with Athens and Alexandria.[1] We can easily imagine the honest pride with which, during the impressionable years of his youth, Paul regarded this historic city of his birth. Its opportunities were unexcelled even in Rome. There, presumably, his father had won for him the high privilege of Roman citizenship. There, too, though far from Palestinian soil, he had been permitted to be instructed

[1] This was the estimate of Strabo, the famous Greek geographer who lived from 54 B. C. to 24 A. D.

in the faith of his fathers. Tarsus, for Paul in these early days, was the open door through which he looked out upon the world. A visit to its harbor, a day in the market place, a late afternoon at the wayside inn where traveling caravans were lodging; or a glimpse of the passing sage or scholar, of municipal court life, of public men and manners; or, it may be, a vigorous climb up the hills leading toward the Taurus mountains, and a view of the distant and blue Mediterranean—would be sufficient to give to him the knowledge of men and the breadth of vision which characterized his later public life.

When Paul was about fifteen years of age he was sent to Jerusalem to begin the period of his rabbinical training. The distance from Tarsus to Jerusalem was five hundred miles. The journey was probably made by boat to Cæsarea, and from there, up into the Judean hills, either on foot or with horses. Paul did not find Jerusalem an utterly strange place. Its association in history with his ancestral faith had already made it intimately familiar. It is not unlikely, moreover, that his own sister, later referred to by Luke, had already taken up her residence in the city.[1] The principal teacher to whom he was sent for instruction was the already renowned Gamaliel. Gamaliel was at this time the most highly revered of the Jerusalem rabbis or doctors of the law. His broadmindedness and nobly religious character were evident both in his tolerant treatment of the early Christians, and in his own frequent use of the writings of the Greek philosophers in his interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures. There were two famous schools of rabbinical theology in Jerusalem at this time. They were known as the schools of Hillel and of Shammai. The interests of the former were ethical; those of the latter were ceremonial. The disciples of Shammai were conservative and emphasized the legalistic aspects of Judaism; the followers of Hillel, on the contrary, were alive and sought to keep alive the prophetic element in their national faith. Gamaliel was of the school of Hillel. It was inevitable that Paul, too, should feel himself drawn to it. The teachings of Gamaliel

[1] See Acts XXIII:16.

satisfied directly and completely the broad Hellenistic tendencies of this young Cicilian scholar.

Nevertheless there was in Paul's nature something of the severity and asceticism of the Stoics, the natural counterpart of which he found in Jewish Pharisaism. Accordingly he became affiliated with that party, allying himself with those of the strictest sect. Thus, though he did not then know it, he underwent a period of preparation in which, both through study and daily religious experience, he was putting legalistic Judaism to a test which, as was shown by his subsequent conversion, it was not able to endure. The goal which, in these early days, Paul set before him was the office of a rabbi. His qualifications for the profession were fully attested by his ability as a scholar and his passionate zeal for the law.[1] After the completion of his study under Gamaliel he returned to Tarsus. He was now about twenty-one years of age. If we reckon from 5 A. D. as the year of his birth, the time was 26 A. D. The years which immediately followed were those of Jesus' public ministry.[2] It is not probable that Paul was in Jerusalem or in Palestine during this period. His own writings imply that he did not ever meet or know Jesus after the manner of the flesh. The vision which transformed his life and made him the foremost among the Christian apostles was a vision of the risen Christ. For his knowledge of the significant events in the earthly life of Jesus he was dependent upon his later friends, principally the leading members of the original apostolic twelve.

The years in Tarsus, following his return from Jerusalem, Paul spent in further preparation and study. Proximity to the university must have led him into more intimate and first-hand acquaintance with the great masters of Greek thought, particularly with the philosophy of Plato and with the Stoics. He must also at this time have given himself to a study of the mystery

[1] The influences of his rabbinical training are manifest in many portions of his later Christian correspondence. His Pharisaic zeal, following his conversion, transformed itself into a self-sacrificing passion for Christ.

[2] I. e., 27–29 A. D.

religions then current in Asia Minor. Perhaps it was the thought of the spiritual inadequacy of these pagan forms of religious thought and worship that impelled him, after a period of eight years,[1] again to return to Jerusalem. When he did so it was with the determination to extol Pharisaism unto the utmost, and to give its peremptory demands a supreme place in his life. It is probable also that he planned to establish himself in the Judean capital as a rabbi or teacher of the law. His arrival found Jerusalem in religious upheaval. The city was stirred by a great revival of Messianism. The movement was principally under Galilean leadership. Certain Jews, calling themselves followers of Jesus, had begun to proclaim the recent advent of the Messianic era. The resurrection of Jesus and Pentecost had mightily stirred the hearts of the people. Hundreds, and even thousands, had confessed their faith in Jesus the Messiah and were worshiping, often in secret places, in his name. The movement, daily gaining in power, threatened the security and supremacy of Judaism. Jewish leaders, even, some of them at one time members of the honored body of the Sanhedrin, were embracing the Christian faith.

II. THE VISION AND THE CALL

A brief investigation convinced Paul that this new sect was founded on teachings which pronounced it a grave heresy. Its founder's claim to Messiahship seemed to him, under the stress of his first impulse to persecution, blasphemous and false. The public utterances of Jesus he regarded as dangerous and misleading; Jesus' appearance in Jerusalem, the sacred stronghold of orthodoxy, must have been interpreted by him as an unjust if not malicious challenge; the story of Jesus' resurrection he no doubt called, as did the remaining Judaistic leaders, a lie. Paul was by nature and training intensely religious. He was scholarly and critical, but squarely honest and radically sincere. He could not, therefore, long remain in spiritual darkness. The

[1] The years were those between the beginning of Jesus' ministry and Paul's conversion, i. e., between 27 and 35 A. D.

argument of character, as presented by the saintly lives of the early Christians, was soon to win a signal victory over his own eloquent passion for the law. From the first, Saul of Tarsus, as he appeared in the rôle of the arch-persecutor of the church, seems to have been more outwardly zealous than morally certain. He found himself, in a strange manner, beset by doubt as he journeyed on the spiritual path he had chosen for himself. The law had for centuries been Israel's treasured possession and religious guide. Had it suddenly failed? Put into words similar to those later used by Paul: Was it possible, through obedience to the law, to attain moral perfection and thus to have peace with God? Young Saul's first answer was a return to a more resolute and a stricter Pharisaism.

When, accordingly, Paul enters upon the scene of Luke's narrative, he appears to be a member of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin.[1] His zeal is measurably augmented by this newly acquired position of leadership and authority. Already made restless by his own spiritual struggle, he now yields to an impetuous passion for violence. He determines upon a more ruthless and relentless program of persecution. The occasion is the preaching of Stephen. Stephen, like Paul himself, is a Hellenistic Jew. He has been appointed a ministering deacon with the charge to serve among the needy members of the apostolic community. He fills his place faithfully at the apostles' tables; but his natural talent and religious devotion do not permit him to stop there. The Holy Spirit is upon him, and he proves himself to be a young man of marvelous eloquence and of spiritual grace. So gifted is he in discourse, and so invincible in open argument, that none, not even Paul himself, is able to withstand him.[2] False witnesses are suborned who uphold grave charges against Stephen; but he meets them with a testimony of radiant faith in Jesus. The mob falls upon him. His enemies become murderers, thus even then fulfilling his prophecy concerning them.

[1] See Acts VII:58, VIII:1, and XXVI:10.

[2] Acts VI:9 mentions the synagogue of Cilicia of which Paul was doubtless a member. Did Paul, too, publicly argue with Stephen, only to be humbled and defeated?

Fortunately for the future of the church Paul witnesses the martyrdom. He hears the voice of Stephen praying: "Lord Jesus, lay not this sin to their charge." The garments of the young martyr lie at his feet; they are the evidence of his consent to the crime. The blood of the Christians is on his hands.

But the crisis is not yet come. Instead of relenting, his Pharisaism drives him to a blind and desperate determination to make havoc of the whole Christian church in Jerusalem. The consequences are alarming. Hundreds of disciples leave the city and seek refuge in the towns and villages of Judea and Samaria. Wherever they go they tell the story of the persecution and preach the gospel. Saul, no doubt realizing the part he has himself taken in causing the rapid spread of the Christian news, is beside himself with humiliation and rage. Luke reports him as now "breathing threatening and slaughter" against the disciples of Jesus. His next plan is to visit the synagogues of the dispersion, and there to ferret out the Christians and to bring them in chains to the Jerusalem Sanhedrin for trial. Accordingly he sets out for Damascus. The distance to that ancient city on the border of the desert is more than a hundred miles. The journey is long and lonely. It gives Paul, the persecutor, his opportunity for serious personal thought. Three questions press insistently upon him for satisfying answers. The first concerns his own individual righteousness or moral character; the second has to do with the new type of religious life confessed and lived by the believing Christians; the third centers upon the person, the character, and the Messiahship of Jesus.

As he ponders them, with his mind and heart now sincerely open to the truth, strange doubts arise to disturb him. What if, instead of rendering a religious service, his bitter persecutions are, in the words of Gamaliel, his revered teacher, but an ignorant and futile attempt at fighting against God? The conclusion to which Paul is thus driven paralyzes him into helplessness. His proud self-confidence and courage are gone. He finds himself swept, as by a passing storm, into a revolutionary spiritual experience. Then suddenly the light breaks upon him. It is a light from heaven. Its glory transcends all earthly things.

Paul is smitten to the ground. But he has fallen to rise again, for he has seen Jesus; he has, like Stephen, been granted a vision of the risen Christ.

Paul emerged from this spiritual crisis a radically changed man. A four-fold transformation has been wrought in him. He had, first of all, been made free. The burden of the law had disappeared at the touch of divine grace. His spiritual life found itself reorganized. The Pharisee in Paul had suddenly withdrawn to the circumference; Christ had come to occupy the center of his being. Jesus revealed himself as light and life and love. Faith had been reborn; hope survived; death had been conquered; the grave had lost its victory; Christ had definitely brought to man the assurance of his immortality.

The second result of Paul's conversion was that it gave him a transformed conception of human life. However lowly and humble, man's existence was conceived to be a manifestation of divine grace. His life itself was sacred. It was, in fact, a trust from God for human investment. The strong man was debtor to the weak. Class pride had, therefore, to give place to mutual social respect. The spirit of Christ made all men brothers. The Christian life, as Paul presently came to know it, was a challenge to a high idealism. It was a prize to be won, a sacred calling to be fulfilled, a sublime adventure or struggle to be welcomed and to be directed toward the pursuit of a noble end. This end or goal Paul later defined as a fully developed Christlike character.

As a third result of his conversion Paul was given a new and revolutionized world outlook. The Judaistic Messianism of his former days gave place to a Christian universalism, grounded in fundamental human needs, and broad enough to include both man and woman, freeman and bondman, Jew and Gentile, Roman and Barbarian. In Christ, nations, as well as men, were brothers, and God was their common Father. The kingdom of Christ, Paul later taught, was the world transformed into a family of spiritually and morally transformed nations. The gospel of Jesus was for humanity, and nothing short of its world-wide dissemination could henceforth serve to satisfy

the apostle's conception of the ultimate totality of its reign.

Lastly Paul's conversion came to him as an inseparable part of his call. He made the discovery that he had been saved to serve and to save others. For him the vision and the commission were essentially one. To know Christ meant to experience the compelling power of his love, and to be constrained to proclaim it to a spiritually hungry and lost world.

Paul's broad Christian universalism was probably the most significant element of his many-sided genius. There was in it a magnificence of conception which, associated with a lofty spirituality, a moral heroism, and a gift of statesmanship, was astounding. Moses, Isaiah, and Plato alone among men of historical antiquity may be accounted to have been, in this respect, his equal. Paul lived, by the reach of his mind, coextensively in three worlds: the worlds of inner mystic experience, of practical human affairs, and of sublime cosmic reasoning. His thought traversed from man and earth, through time and space, beyond heaven to God.[1] It could content itself with nothing less than an approach to ultimate spiritual reality. Expressed in words made significant by his conversion, Paul's theology thereafter centered upon one sublime truth, namely, the perfect degree and magnitude of world redemption wrought by God through Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, though a philosopher, Paul was not an artificer of idle dreams. He did not lose himself in aimless or meaningless speculation. Instead he gave himself to Christ in practical and moral surrender, he became a toiling itinerant evangelist, a heart-burdened and untiring pastor, a letter-writer, a collector of missionary benevolences, and, most significant of all, a patient and singularly efficient builder of Christian churches in pagan communities throughout the Roman empire.

III. THE YEARS OF MISSIONARY APPRENTICESHIP

Paul's arrival in Damascus had been anticipated by the Christians with dread of disaster. He entered the city, however, not

[1] Read e. g., Romans VIII:38–39.

as a persecutor, but as a penitent. Ananias, a leader among the disciples there, was quick to discern the change which had come upon Paul and to realize the importance of his conversion for the future of the Christian church. Luke, in his narrative, is silent concerning the next step which the young apostle now found it necessary to take. Paul himself, however, tells us, in his letter to the Galatians, that he withdrew into Arabia.[1] He continued his sojourn there for three years. They were years of spiritual preparation, similar to the forty years which Moses spent in the land of Midian, and the forty preparatory days of Jesus in the wilderness. At the end of this time Paul returned to Damascus. He could not, however, remain long. Already those who had once been his expected allies had turned against him. For the first time in his life he was himself called upon to endure persecution. It was a hard lesson for the still proud apostle in whom there yet remained much of the nature of the former Pharisee. The time came later when he could rejoice in tribulation and suffering for the cause of Christ. But now it was a grievous and bitter experience. Let down in a basket through a window by the wall of the city and thus forced to make his escape, the humiliated figure of Paul presented a striking contrast to the man who three years before had left Jerusalem and journeyed toward the Syrian city "breathing threatening and slaughter." [2]

The purpose of Paul's return to Jerusalem is apparent. The narratives of Luke and of Paul himself imply two reasons.[3] First, he wished there to meet and to have a visit with Peter. The aim of this visit was not to receive instruction in disciple-

[1] Gal. I:17 f. Luke's reference to Paul's sojourn in Damascus, during which he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, finds a more appropriate chronological setting if placed after the apostle's period of retirement in Arabia. It was not until then that he was prepared to preach the Christ whom, until his arrival in Damascus, he had so relentlessly persecuted.

[2] The Greek words "*Spuris*" (used in Acts IX:25) and "*Sargane*" (used in II Cor. XI:33) both represent strong flexible baskets used for carrying fish. It is probable that, to insure Paul's escape, his friends sewed shut the basket in which they lowered him on that critical occasion. No wonder that he experienced a sense of humiliation as he later reflected upon the incident. See II Cor. XI:30.

[3] Gal. I:18, and Acts IX:29.

ship or to be given his apostolic appointment or commission. This commission, as he later declared, had come to him directly by a revelation of Jesus Christ. What he wanted was that Peter should tell him the story of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus. Paul already knew Jesus, but not according to the flesh. His religious experience needed now to be reinforced by an actual knowledge of the historical facts which formed its basis.

Peter and Paul spent fifteen days together, probably in the home of Mary, the mother of Mark, where the elder apostle appears to have made his home during the time of his residence in Jerusalem. There, also, Paul first met Mark who, with Barnabas, his cousin, later accompanied him on his first missionary journey. Barnabas may, prior to this time, already have been acquainted with Paul.[1] Such, at least, is the natural inference from the fact that Paul, upon his arrival in Jerusalem, was introduced and commended by Barnabas to the fearful group of Christian disciples in the city. Then, too, Paul had come to Jerusalem in order that there, in the very citadel of Pharisaism, he might bear witness of Jesus against whom, three years before, he had raised his voice and lifted his hand in bitter blasphemy. The privilege was not denied him. He preached boldly that Jesus was the Christ. The result was a rise of opposition so immediate and determined that, to save his life, his friends found it necessary to urge him to leave the city. He was accompanied by a group of them as far as Cæsarea, the Mediterranean seaport, from which he set sail for Tarsus.

Paul's departure was followed by a period of tranquillity among the churches of Palestine. Persecution from Jewish sources ceased, partly, it may be supposed, because Peter and some of the other apostles were out of the city upon missions of evangelism, and partly for the reason that the mother church, now accepting more and more the leadership of James, began gradually to conciliate hostile Judaistic opinion.[2] The rapid

[1] The island of Cyprus, Barnabas' home, lay not far out to sea from the Cilician mainland, Paul's native territory. Perhaps the university at Tarsus had at one time attracted Barnabas to the province.

[2] James, one of the four named brothers of Jesus, was surnamed "the Just." He seems, for a time at least, to have been a patron of the "Judaizing" tendency within

growth of the church, and the marked increase in the number of Gentile converts during this period, have already been noted. The gospel was being steadily carried northward along the Mediterranean coast, through Phœnicia into upper Syria. In a comparatively short time it had reached Antioch. There, in addition to the Christian work done among the Jews of the Dispersion, a definitely adopted program of evangelism was put into action to reach the Gentile population. This new type of missionary work was intrusted, in the main, to certain leaders from Cyprus and Cyrene.[1] In a very short time two distinct Christian movements were found to be under way in Antioch: the one among the Greek-speaking Jews; the other among the Gentiles.

The results of this two-fold program of missionary activity were full of great future significance. A Jewish-Gentile church came into existence. New problems arose, some of them social, others doctrinal. Were Jews and Gentiles, as Christians, thereafter to associate freely and on a basis of absolute equality? Was it to be assumed that, by adopting Christianity through faith in Jesus, Gentiles automatically became Jews? Or, on the other hand, did necessity demand that a Greek adopt Judaism in order to be a Christian? The answers to these questions involved grave difficulties whose solution required time and the applied genius of a future great man. The apostolic age produced such a man in the person of Paul.

When the report of the growing Christian work at Antioch reached the Jerusalem apostles, they sent Barnabas to take it in charge. His arrival was the signal of a period of renewed activity. The number of converts increased. The spirit of God graciously accompanied the ministry of this good man. The church was greatly blessed. Then, as Barnabas looked about him, he sensed the urgent need of additional leadership. A journey to Tarsus brought Paul to Antioch where the two apostles labored together throughout the year preaching and teaching among

the early church. He gained high favor with the Jews. Later, however, he incurred the displeasure of the Sadducees. He was put to death in 61 A. D. at the instigation of the high priest. Tradition attributes to him the authorship of the N. T. epistle which bears his name.

[1] Acts XI:20.

both Jewish and Gentile converts.[1] The task was not new to Paul. He had, by this time, spent a period of not less than seven years in preparatory evangelism in the province of Cilicia. They had been years of hardship, but of joyful service.[2] There had been moments of ecstatic vision when he had, in spirit, dwelt with Christ in heavenly places. These high moments had been glorious but rare. More often he had faced peril both on land and sea: harassed by persecutors, exposed to hunger and cold, and burdened with anxiety for the newly founded churches. Yet in all these trials he had been sustained by a living faith in Jesus, and impelled by a passion for Christian service which knew no bound. The apostle was thus fully prepared for the future adventures and sufferings which awaited him in Gentile lands.

Luke, at this point in his narrative,[3] relates an incident of historical importance. It concerns a widespread famine which had been predicted by a certain Christian prophet named Agabus, and which reached its stage of greatest severity in Judea in the year 46 A. D.[4] The distress of the Judean brethren aroused the genuine sympathy of the Christians at Antioch. An offering was collected in their behalf and sent to the stricken area. The act was one of fine generosity. Behind it may clearly be seen the compassion and the wisdom of Barnabas. How welcome the gift must have been may be inferred from the added crisis through which the Jerusalem church had just then passed because of the martyrdom of the apostle James.[5] Paul and Barnabas themselves were the carriers of the offering. Its significance for our study lies in the fact that through it the apostles accomplished two things: they cemented the Antioch and Jerusalem churches into a socially ministering brotherhood; they

[1] Barnabas, during this year, probably worked among the Jews; Paul among the Gentiles. Paul may have made an attempt, at this time, of accommodating the Jewish gospel to the Gentile situation,—a course which he later abandoned.

[2] Paul's experiences, recounted in II Cor. XI–XII and not referred to in connection with any other time in his life, find here their natural historical setting.

[3] Acts XI:27–30.

[4] It is dated by Luke in the reign of Claudius whose rule extended from 41 to 54 A. D.

[5] Acts XII:2. The death of James at the hand of Agrippa occurred in 44 A. D.

prepared the way for an amicable solution of the difficult problems soon to arise respecting the relationship between Jewish and Gentile Christianity.[1]

[1] Did Paul on this journey actually accompany Barnabas all the way to Jerusalem? Is Gal. II:1–10 parallel to Acts XI:29–30, or to Acts XV? If to Acts XV, then Gal. II:1–10, which casts interesting light upon the later Jerusalem conference, will receive our attention in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE FIRST MISSIONARY PERIOD

TWELVE years had now passed since Paul's conversion. Of these, three had been spent in quiet retirement in Arabia, seven in unrecorded evangelistic work in the region surrounding Tarsus, and probably two in Antioch as a co-laborer with Barnabas. It is apparent from the events thus outlined that Paul was not at this time merely at the beginning of his missionary career. Reckoned in years, the period of his Cilician and Syrian ministry was exactly equal to that covering his three great missionary journeys. In other respects, however, the latter period completely eclipsed the former. The historical significance of the period of nine years upon which the apostle now entered can scarcely be over-estimated. They marked the actual rise of Christianity, and its transplanting in European soil. The time required for the three individual missionary campaigns varied. The first, taking Paul into Galatia, lasted two years; the second, calling him to Macedonia and Achaia, continued throughout three years; the third, centering in Ephesus, in the province of Asia, was extended into four years. Assuming the settlement of certain difficult questions of chronology, the period may be dated from 47 to 56 A. D. Paul was, by this time, about 42 years of age, excellently trained, in the prime vigor of life, and credited with an individual record of nearly a decade of approved missionary service. His apprenticeship was completed. He was now ready to step from the workshop out into the world. Twelve years had passed since he had first heard the call of Christ. Very definitely, now, and irresistibly came the call of the empire.

I. THE GOSPEL IN GALATIA

The occasion for the new evangelistic enterprise offered itself when three disciples of the church in Antioch, whom Luke called prophets, laid their hands upon Paul and Barnabas and, in the name of the Holy Spirit, sent them out to undertake the task for which they had been especially prepared.[1] They embarked at Seleucia, the harbor of Antioch, and sailed westward to the Island of Cyprus, the native home of Barnabas. They were accompanied on their way by Mark, Barnabas' young cousin, whose home was in Jerusalem, and who, years afterward, became the author of the Gospel which bears his name. Landing at the eastern seaport, Salamis, they preached the word of God in the Jewish synagogue. The first efforts were doubtless rewarded with encouraging success. The field was not entirely new. The island, lying not more than one hundred miles from the mainland, was not a stranger to the Christian Gospel. Certain disciples, who had fled from Jerusalem at the time of the martyrdom of Stephen, finding refuge there had told the islanders the story of Jesus.[2]

The three missionaries traversed Cyprus from coast to coast, coming at its western end to Paphos, the Roman capital and resident city of the Roman governor Sergius Paulus. Paphos was a typical pagan city. Moral life in it was, therefore, upon a rather low plane. Ignorance and superstition among the common inhabitants were grossly prevalent. The worship of Venus tended toward licentiousness. Sorcerers, with their occult sciences, preyed upon the fears of the people, creating a typically pagan atmosphere of spiritual depression. The situation was one which openly challenged the apostles of Jesus. Paul was presently approached by one of these sorcerers. He was a Jew. By a strange coincidence his name was Bar-Jesus. Racial kinsman though he was, he recognized in Paul an enemy to his craft. Paul, moved to pity by the tragedy of this man's trafficking in human souls,

[1] Acts XIII:1. The three Christian prophets were Simeon, called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, the foster brother, or at one time playmate, of Herod Antipas.
[2] Acts XI:19.

withstood him boldly. The apostle's sympathy, reinforced by his evident personal talent and moral courage, pleased the proconsul Sergius Paulus. In fact, it won his friendship, and apparently resulted in his conversion.[1]

Paul must have interpreted the event at Paphos as a sign of future promise. It demonstrated, beyond words, the power of the gospel to make its impact upon the Roman world. Henceforth, it seemed to the apostle, the direction of his path was clear. His life work now lay open before him. If the evangelization of Cyprus had at first been the extent of his missionary plans, he now regarded it as but preliminary to the greater task awaiting him in western Asia. We note from Luke's record [2] the change he himself seems to have undergone. Theretofore the historian had written "Barnabas and Saul"; thereafter he wrote "Paul and his company." Paul had become the leader. He had earned the right to full apostleship. Christ, who had already been magnified in him, was now, through Paul's larger ministry, to enter upon a speedy conquest of the Roman world.

The missionaries, accordingly, set sail northward toward the province of Pamphylia. Their immediate destination was Perga. The distance to it was about two hundred miles. Paul was eager with anticipation. Barnabas, though less actively enthusiastic, was full of hope and loyal. Together they were a strong and intrepid team of evangelistic pioneers. The same tribute, however, could not be paid to their youthful companion, John Mark, who, after the company had reached Perga, suddenly parted with Paul and Barnabas and returned to his home in Jerusalem. Why? Possibly because, being young and inexperienced, he was homesick. More likely, either because he was displeased with Paul's recent assumption of Barnabas' place of leadership; or, because the apostles' then anticipated journey into the province of Asia involved hazards for which Mark was as yet unprepared. If the last of these was the reason for Mark's return, he need not have forsaken his elder companions; for the journey was not actually undertaken. The cause

[1] Acts XIII:12.
[2] Acts XIII:13.

for Paul's apparently abrupt change of plans can only be conjectured. Reports may have come to him that Asia was, for the present, a closed field. Foreigners, especially traveling teachers, may have been temporarily forbidden access to its leading cities. If so, the missionaries would be obliged to look elsewhere for an open door. It is probable also that Paul was influenced by a more personal reason. There are indications that he was detained in Perga by an attack of illness. It may have been a case of malarial fever so common in the coast lowlands of Pamphylia.[1] As soon, accordingly, as he was able, Barnabas and he directed their course toward the healthful highland region of Phrygia and Roman Galatia. A day's journey found them in mountain air.

Antioch of Pisidia was situated among the mountains nearly four thousand feet above sea level. It was on a highway and therefore widely known for its good climate. The emperor Augustus had granted it the freedom of an independent Roman colony. Paul and Barnabas must have felt immediately at home in it. The first Sabbath found them among the worshipers in the Jewish synagogue. It was natural that they should be invited, by the elders of the synagogue, to address the people. Hebrew travelers from Palestine, or the regions nearer to it, were always welcomed by their kinsman of the Dispersion. Paul anticipated such invitations and accepted them as opportunities to proclaim the gospel of Jesus. The audience upon these occasions was usually composed of hearers of two classes: (1) "men of Israel," that is, Hebrews and proselytes; (2) persons who "feared God," who found themselves attracted by the moral ideals and the monotheistic faith of Judaism, but were not prepared to submit to its ceremonial law.

Paul's sermon to the people at Antioch [2] began with a prophetic summary of the outstanding events in Hebrew history,

[1] See, in this connection, Ramsay, "The Church in the Roman Empire," p. 61 f. Cf. also Gal. IV:13.

[2] Read carefully Acts XIII:16–41. This early discourse is an example, both of Paul's general message and his method of evangelistic approach. Luke was able, with the aid of additional suggestions, to reconstruct it from the many others he himself later heard.

culminating in the ministry, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. It ended with words of promise and exhortation whose keynote was faith in the risen and living Christ, through whom, more fully than through the law of Moses, man could attain the complete spiritual life and know the will and power of God. The message was one of historical insight, of personal power, of spiritual grace, of mystical suggestiveness, and of radiant and immortal hope. It was gladly received. The Gentile hearers were particularly pleased. The fact that Paul was himself a Hellenist commended him to them. However, it was, in reality, not to Paul, but to his faith in Jesus, that they were attracted. Here, at last, they had found a religion transcending legalism and offering life. Christianity appealed to them as a true mystery religion, morally refined, founded on fact, and offering not only forgiveness but spiritual fellowship and the promise of immortality.

The Jewish leaders at Antioch, however, were of another and different opinion. Their attitude had at first been friendly. But when, a week later, they observed the strong Gentile following which Paul and Barnabas were getting from within the synagogue, they turned against the Christian apostles. The success of the gospel message was interpreted by them as an offense against Judaism. By the end of another week they had been able to stir up so strong an opposition that Paul found himself compelled, first, openly to withstand them, and then to turn from them to the Gentile population of the city. Even there the apostles were not to be left unmolested. The Jews, unable themselves to drive out the missionaries, instigated a revolt against them through the devout women and chief men of the city. In the crisis which ensued Paul and Barnabas were compelled to leave Antioch. Thus ended their first adventure in Christian evangelism in the territory of Galatia.

Luke tells us that the apostles left Antioch for Iconium "filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit." They could do so because the whole city had been touched by their message. Paul was especially grateful for the success of the gospel among the

Gentiles. His faith in them was found to be fully justified. It was to them that now, as never before, he looked for the future reward of his work. This assurance reconfirmed the certainty of his call. It stirred to flame the already awakened passion in him to carry Christ to the far centers of the Roman empire. The outlook he had gained from this mountain city, situated more than three-fourths of a mile above the level of the sea, was now being transformed before him into a vision of the coming of that Kingdom in which there was to be neither Jew nor Gentile, neither master nor bondman, neither enmity nor persecution, nor sin, nor sorrow, nor death; whose goal was to be a universal human brotherhood, made possible through faith in Jesus and by self-sacrificial Christian fellowship.

Iconium lay eighty miles east of Pisidian Antioch. Though not yet a Roman colony it was an important city and was on a leading Roman highway.[1] Unlike Antioch, which was built upon a mountain plateau, Iconium lay nestled in a fertile valley at a mountain's edge, fed by a mountain stream. This stream was the life of the city. It gave itself to Iconium just as the Orontes was giving itself to Syrian Antioch, and the famous Abana was sacrificing its life to sustain ancient Damascus. Its waters conveyed the meaning of a true parable; they typified the missionary lives of Barnabas and Paul. Luke writes that, upon entering the city, they offered themselves so freely and at the same time spoke so boldly that a great multitude, both of Jews and Greeks, became immediate believers in Christ. Miracles, probably of healing, were wrought by them. The gospel was received as joyous good news.

Presently, however, there arose the by-now-expected Jewish antagonism. It divided the people into three groups: the Jews; the Greeks; and the Christians. This division at first offered the apostles protection. Then public sentiment was crystallized against them and the city found itself in a mad uproar. Jews

[1] Iconium became a Roman colony early in the second century during the reign of the emperor Hadrian (117–138 A. D.).

and Gentiles alike joined in an assault upon Paul and Barnabas. Driven by the threat of flying stones, they fled from Iconium [1] and, continuing their journey, came to the Lycaonian city of Lystra.

The Lycaonians were not, as has been supposed, an utterly rude and barbarous people. The majority of them were plain peasants, but thoroughly civilized. Lystra, according to an inscription on a coin found there in 1885, was a Roman colony. The city then lay in a peaceful and well-watered valley about twenty miles to the west and south of Iconium. Paul and Barnabas found it a quiet and welcome place of refuge. Apparently there were few Jews among its inhabitants, for there is no mention made by Luke of the existence of a synagogue. The gospel, accordingly, was preached to the people on the streets or in the courtyards. Multitudes thronged to hear the word. The apostles' early days in Lystra suggest a scene taken from the Galilean ministry of Jesus. The quiet surroundings, the native rural population, Paul's work of healing, the eager though misguided crowd of worshipers, and finally the bitter hostility of the Jews, taken together, complete the parallel.

The response of the Lycaonians in this new mission field stands out in vivid contrast to that of the Jews. The former, though superstitious, were sincere; the later were orthodox but bigoted. The pagans of Lystra believed the apostles to be gods; the Jews regarded them as dangerous heretics or base perverters. To Paul and Barnabas the events of their sojourn in this little city must later have been full of strange suggestiveness. How greatly its people were in need of the gospel of Christ! How eager the Gentiles, and how obstinate the Jews! The peasant Lycaonians had offered Paul garlands; [2] his kinsmen, the sons of Israel, on the

[1] An interesting second century romance has survived to add to our information concerning Paul's missionary work at Iconium. It is called "The Acts of Paul and Thecla." Some of its incidents may fairly claim authenticity, especially, e. g., that centering upon Thecla's vow of virginity after hearing one of Paul's discourses. According to the story Paul was, for this sermon, driven from the city and Thecla was condemned to be burned alive. A timely rainfall, however, intervened and she was rescued. Thereafter she is reported to have become a leader among the Christian disciples in Iconium.

[2] The Lycaonians were familiar with the story current in the neighboring country

other hand, had beaten him with stones. Here, mingled in one cup, were the joy and the sorrow to be tasted by those accounted worthy of being called ambassadors of Christ. Did Paul then think of Stephen? If so, he must also have thought of the golden harvest of Stephen's martyrdom. Through it the Gentile world was being given its opportunity to hear of Jesus. Stephen's unfinished work had fallen as a legacy to Paul. He had already proved himself worthy of it. He had learned to be patient in tribulation, to bless and not to chafe under persecution, to rejoice in hope, to be fervent in spirit, and to work unceasingly yet contentedly in the service of Christ.[1]

Paul had, by the next day, sufficiently recovered from the effects of the stoning to proceed on his journey to the neighboring city of Derbe. Of the apostles' work there we have only a very brief record. Apparently it was done quietly and without molestation. The people, like those of Lystra, were mostly Lycaonians. One notable convert, at least, crowned Paul's labors.[2]

After a short period of further evangelistic effort in Derbe, Paul and Barnabas considered their ministry in Galatia practically ended. Instead, however, of starting on a homeward journey across the Taurus Mountains by means of the familiar highway that led through the Cilician Gates, and from there downward into Tarsus, they retraced their steps, and, beginning with Lystra and continuing to Iconium and afterward to Antioch of Pisidia, they first comforted and taught the newly added Christian converts, and then provided them with spiritual leaders through whom the Galatian churches of the future were to be firmly established. In due time they arrived again at Perga. Here they remained only long enough to offer to the people

of Phrygia concerning Jupiter and Mercury, the Greek gods who were said to have visited the virtuous peasants Baucis and Philemon and to have been entertained by them. The dignified figure of Barnabas caused him to be identified as Zeus; Paul's eloquence and energetic nature suggested Hermes, or the Roman Mercury, the god with the winged feet who served as Jupiter's chief messenger.

[1] See Romans XII:11–12. Paul was lastingly rewarded for his ministry in Lystra by the conversion of Timothy, who later joined him on his missionary journeys, and thereafter himself became a leader of the Christian church in the province of Asia.

[2] He was Gaius, mentioned in Acts XX:4.

of the town the good tidings of the gospel. Then, wishing to be at home for the winter, and finding the season of navigation about to close, they set out for the coast. Attalia, the most accessible seaport, was not more than fifteen miles away. There, finding a vessel eastward bound, they embarked for Syrian Antioch, where they related to the church that had commissioned them the inspiring story of what God had wrought through them by the preaching of the gospel of Jesus. The report was joyously received. It conveyed, upon analysis, a significant threefold inference: first, that the Gentiles, wherever they were free from molesting Judaizers, were receiving the gospel with an unaffected eagerness that held the promise of a glorious future; second, that Paul, who had two years before been sent into the mission field to be a helpful assistant to Barnabas, had returned an acknowledged leader with a wide missionary experience, a future program, and an evangelistic passion that astonished as much as it thrilled the Antiochian Christians; third, that Christianity, wherever it was successfully established, was growing more and more independent of Judaism, and was assuming a world outlook destined some day to make it a genuinely universal religion.

II. THE QUESTION OF THE LAW

When the news of Paul's work in Galatia reached Jerusalem, the effect was two-fold. There was, on the one hand, reason for genuine rejoicing. The Christians there were glad that Saul of Tarsus, once a persecutor, was continuing openly and boldly to witness for Jesus. They were pleased with his successes as an evangelist among the Gentiles. They could not but be thankful that the Messiahship of Jesus was now receiving marked recognition upon the open frontiers of the Roman world. On the other hand, there were signs which gave the apostles of the mother church cause for serious concern. A grave problem had risen in connection with Christian missions in Gentile lands. It involved the relationship of Judaism to the gospel and the Messiahship of Jesus. It centered upon Paul's right to recognized Christian apostleship.

Paul, it was known, was taking unusual liberty in interpreting the gospel. He regarded it as a new way of life and not merely as a movement within Judaism. The essential element in his evangelistic message was a living and saving faith in Jesus. Judaism, with its ceremonial law, was looked upon by him as, at best, but instrumental in bringing men to Christ. For those who, living in the Gentile world, had been otherwise disciplined, the law was not only superfluous, but an unwarranted burden or an actual hindrance. It was but natural that such a view expressed by Paul should be regarded by the Jerusalem leaders with unaffected alarm. They were themselves loyal Jews. The presence of the temple with its festivals and sacred ritual attracted them. It served, moreover, as a bond of mutual understanding between themselves and their Judaistic brethren. Paul, on the contrary, was conscious of no such affiliation. The synagogues outside of Palestine were expressly democratic and cosmopolitan. Institutionalism and race distinction counted for little by the side of those broad humanitarian principles which made men everywhere akin.

The differences which threatened a division between Paul and the Jerusalem apostles centered upon the priority of freedom over tradition. It was the age-old question of the individual against the order. The issues to be confronted presented themselves in the form of three questions: (1) Is it possible for a Gentile to become a Christian without first adopting Judaism? (2) Even if so, will a Gentile not be a better Christian by keeping the ceremonial law? (3) Does becoming a Christian absolve a Jew from his former ceremonial obligations? Paul was solemnly conscious that, by its answer to these questions, the apostolic church would determine its own future destiny. He had, from the beginning, cherished the ideal of a united church, a world-wide Christianity. Would this ideal survive the impending crisis? He anticipated from the Judaistic leaders the proposal of a program of compromise. James and Peter would probably suggest it, in order to satisfy the conservative legalistic party within the church. Paul had already decided that he could not give such a measure his approval. The Gentile churches were not to

be burdened with a yoke of subjection to the Jewish law. Better a divided Christian institution than an enslaved Christian conscience. Yet, despite serious difficulties, Paul believed confidently that time would bring about an amicable solution.

The crisis came while Paul was still in Antioch, resting from the labors of his first missionary campaign. It came with the report that certain Christians, later known in apostolic history as Judaizers, had arrived in the city and were secretly engaged in "spying out the liberty" [1] of the Antiochian Christians by telling them that it was necessary for them as believers in Jesus to be circumcised and to adopt the ceremonial restrictions of the Jewish law. Following a spirited dissension with these Judean brethren, Paul prepared to go to Jerusalem. He took with him Barnabas, his missionary associate, and Titus, a young Greek convert. The events which transpired in Jerusalem, upon Paul's arrival there, are vividly recorded in his own letter to the Galatians.[2] The whole incident was, indeed, at the time this letter was written, still clearly before him. He recalled its important factors one by one. Three of them were outstanding and deserve particular mention. The first was that Paul did not undertake the difficult task before him without divine guidance. He did not leave Antioch for Jerusalem until he had the assurance that he was being led of God. The second was that, having been inwardly convinced of the genuineness of the work of spiritual regeneration wrought by the gospel in the lives of the Gentile believers, he remained steadfast in his defense of their Christian freedom. In the third place he recalled with gratitude that the interview ended amicably. He gained the coöperation and retained the brotherly friendship of the Jerusalem apostles. The unity of the church was preserved and Paul was able to return to Antioch with the good wishes of James, Peter, and John who, in parting, gave him the right hand of Christian fellowship. The remembrance of the impoverished disciples in Jerusa-

[1] See Gal. II:4.

[2] Luke's account in Acts XV may be regarded as parallel to that of Galatians II:1–10. The divergences in the two narratives are best explained on the assumption that Luke was dependent for his information upon secondary sources. The Jerusalem interview took place in 49 A. D.; the letter to the Galatians was written in 52 A. D.

lem, enjoined upon Paul at this occasion, was not accepted by him as a burden. He regarded it rather as an opportunity by means of which to bind the Gentile Christian communities more closely both to himself, and to the mother church. He realized, moreover, that nothing so effectually disarms hostility and criticism as a debt of gratitude openly acknowledged and willingly discharged.

The crisis thus partly averted was however not wholly past. For a time the Christians at Antioch lived in happiness and tranquillity. Then an incident occurred whose authenticity might be in doubt were it not recorded by Paul himself. Peter, whom Paul must have convinced but not fully converted at the time of the Jerusalem conference, came to visit the Antiochian church. Finding, upon his arrival, that he had come into a community in which the Christian members, both Jews and Gentiles, lived and ate together in unaffected unity, he gave the plan his prompt and unqualified approval by joining with them and regarding himself as one of their number. After Peter's experiences in Joppa and in the house of Cornelius, this was neither an unnatural nor a difficult thing for him to do. Presently, however, certain other persons, coming from Jerusalem, arrived at Antioch. Observing his conduct they lost no time in persuading Peter that he had committed a grave error. These men, Paul tells us,[1] were representatives of the party of James.[2] They came fully prepared for their task. Their aim was to secure the withdrawal of the Jewish Christians from the leadership of Paul. The arguments to which they took recourse were probably those they later carried over into Galatia. They are preserved for us in his subsequently written letter to the Galatians. Reserving an attack upon Paul's apostleship for a later time when, in his absence, it could be made more boldly and effectively, they undertook to lay the chief stress of their words upon the claimed superiority of a Christian faith which found

[1] Gal. II:12.

[2] They probably called themselves such in order to give apostolic sanction to their Judaizing project. It is hard to believe that James himself gave the plan his approval.

its basis in the Jewish ceremonial law. They did not, it is evident, deny the Gentiles the right to be called Christians. As believers in Paul's gospel they had rightly won the title to that name. It had, in fact, been given them in derision by the general pagan population of the city. But were these Gentile Christians followers of Jesus the Messiah? Evidently not, for they were not to be counted among the lost of the house of Israel to whom Jesus, according to his own words, had declared himself to have been sent.[1] Christians these Gentiles might become; but privileged sons of the Messiah they never could be. That was an honor granted only to Jews. A Christian could, therefore, not be made perfect except through the law. The obligations of the law, moreover, were incumbent upon every Jew as a member of his race. His acceptance of the Messiahship of Jesus in reality implied an added burden of racial responsibility.

Such, in brief, were the arguments of the Judaizers. Their effect was astonishing. Both Peter and Barnabas, according to the record, were carried away by them. For a moment the spirit of Jesus yielded to the fear of tradition. The Jewish Christians separated themselves from their Gentile brethren. The whole outcome momentarily perplexed and humiliated Paul. Then he boldly confronted Peter. The public rebuke administered to the elder by the younger apostle was severe; but it seems to have been justified. A momentous issue was at stake. The future of the Christian gospel was in jeopardy. Paul, by this time, had come to be fully persuaded that man is saved in the sight of God, either by the law, or by a living faith in Jesus Christ. He accepted no other alternative. If man is saved by keeping the law, then the death of Christ was all but in vain; if, however, by faith, then the law, as an agent of human redemption, is superfluous. The moral life, Paul taught, was a life of obedience to the will of God as revealed to man through faith. Faith was interpreted by the apostle as an experience of conscious and adventurous fellowship with Jesus Christ. Paul himself needed no better reply with which to meet the harassing legalizers, who

[1] Matt. XV:24.

thereafter were to camp upon his trail, than the matchless words of his own subsequent letter to the Galatians: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." [1]

[1] Gal. II:20.

CHAPTER XXX

THE SECOND MISSIONARY PERIOD

FOLLOWING the episode with Peter, Paul remained in Antioch for a season to strengthen the work among the Gentile converts of that city. With this task accomplished, his thought turned toward the newly founded Galatian churches. His mission in Galatia had hitherto been purely evangelistic. Doubtless by this time new converts had been added to the already established Christian communities. The leaders, whom he had appointed on his return journey out of the province, had by now been given time to carry out his plans of church organization. The time was ripe for a revisitation of the churches for the purpose of giving them necessary exhortation and instruction. It was, accordingly, early in the autumn, probably of the year 49 A. D., that Paul proposed to Barnabas that they take a second journey into the Galatian territory. Barnabas was agreed, and made a counter proposal; it was that his cousin Mark be invited to accompany them on the tour. Paul demurred. Mark, in his opinion, had proved himself disloyal to the missionary enterprise. His desertion, on a previous occasion, had, Paul thought, disqualified him. Barnabas, assured of Mark's developing character and talent, interceded in his behalf. Paul, however, stood firm. The result was a break between them, as a consequence of which Barnabas took Mark and set sail for the island of Cyprus. Since the remaining portion of the book of the Acts deals exclusively with the missionary work of Paul, and with the spread of the gospel westward across Asia Minor and eastern Europe into Rome, the character of Barnabas now all but disappears from apostolic history. It is evident, however, from Paul's own reference to Barnabas in First Corinthians, that for five years, at least,

Barnabas continued to be a loyal and effective missionary.[1]

Paul, thereupon choosing Silas to accompany him, set out by land on the road that led northward from Antioch through upper Syria into Cilicia, and thence westward, through the narrow portion of the kingdom of Antiochus, into Galatia.[2] On their journey through Cilicia the two apostles visited the Christian churches that had been founded by Paul during the seven years of his missionary apprenticeship which had preceded his call to Syrian Antioch. Traveling with horses along a winding highway which frequently led through hills overlooking the sea, they came to Tarsus. Several more days of riding took them through the Cilician Gates directly into the region of Paul's first missionary journey. They first visited Derbe, where Paul conveyed greetings to the Christians from Barnabas and introduced them to Silas. Then, after an address of encouragement—containing, in all probability, a note of warning against the anticipated influence of the Judaizers—the missionaries proceeded to Lystra. Here Paul found another valuable associate in the person of Timothy, a young man who had become a convert since the time of the apostle's evangelistic campaign in that city. Timothy's father was a Greek; his mother a Jewess. Paul, aware of the youth's qualifications, chose him for a place of future service in the widening missionary field.[3]

Luke's account of the events which immediately follow is fragmentary and brief.[4] The historian is hastening in his narrative to come to the point of a new departure. A new epoch of evangelism is before him. He writes, as before, pictorially and accurately, but with a passion momentarily reflecting the spirit and power of Paul. The memory of a great period in his own life is upon him. From a mere recorder he is about to be trans-

[1] See I Cor. IX:6. First Corinthians was written during Paul's third missionary journey, c. 55 A. D.

[2] The kingdom of Antiochus here referred to was the semi-independent state of Commogene which the emperor Claudius ceded to Antiochus.

[3] Paul's circumcision of Timothy shows that he wished at this time to conciliate and not to antagonize the Jews. The letter of restrictions referred to in Acts XV:23–29 belongs to a later date than 49 A. D., the time of the Jerusalem interview.

[4] Acts XVI:6–10. Note, in particular, the swiftness of the narrative.

formed into a living historian. The greater portion of what will follow in the book of the Acts is to be composed of chapters from his own experience. Accordingly, with a few swift and graphic sentences, he carries Paul accompanied by Timothy and Silas first through the cities of Galatia and Phrygia, then northward along the border of the province of Asia to Bithynia, and thereafter unexpectedly westward, through Mysia, to Troas on the coast of the Ægean sea.

I. MACEDONIA

The apostles arrived at Troas, the site of the once renowned harbor city not far from the mouth of the Dardanelles, in response to a strange but divine guidance. Asia had closed itself against them, and the Holy Spirit had forbidden them to enter Bithynia. A long journey had been undertaken, and at length completed, which had led them out of their course and to an unanticipated goal. Was not God Himself leading the way to hitherto unexplored fields of evangelistic adventure? Paul had, he knew, come to a critical moment in his life. He wanted, with all his heart, to do the will of Christ. While awaiting an answer, a mystical experience came to him. It came in the form of a vision or trance in which he saw before him the figure of a man from Macedonia and heard a voice saying: "Come over into Macedonia and help us." In a moment the door to Europe had swung open, and he saw the vast multitudes of a new western empire, sin-laden, world-weary, and spiritually hungry to hear the gospel of Jesus. The meaning of the vision was unmistakable. The call of the new world was the call of Christ.

Who, if an actually historical person, was this man from Macedonia? A coincidence in Luke's narrative at this point offers a possible answer. Beginning with Acts XVI: 10, his account unexpectedly changes from the use of the third to the first person. Certain so-called "we" passages are here introduced which, beginning with this time, follow one another at stated intervals throughout the remainder of the book. These selections, traceable directly to Luke's travel diary, are of superior authen-

ticity.[1] They suggest that Luke was Paul's companion as he set sail from Troas across the Ægean to Macedonia. These facts warrant the conclusion that it may have been Luke himself who, having met and interviewed Paul at Troas—or, perhaps, having been called as a physician to give Paul medical advice—furnished him with the thought which, later in the night, transformed itself into the spiritual vision and the call.[2]

Thus divinely commissioned to the task of evangelizing Macedonia, and accompanied by Timothy, Silas, and Luke, Paul set sail from Troas for Philippi. This important city seems at the time to have been Luke's home. It had a comparatively recent but notable history. Here, in 42 B. C., following the death of Cæsar, Octavius and Antony, after defeating Cassius and Brutus, had first established the Roman empire. In consequence of this significant fact, Philippi was made a Roman colony. Though politically outranked by Amphipolis, Luke, knowing it intimately, calls it the chief city of the district. Paul found a small Jewish population in Philippi, but no synagogue. The customary place of worship for those of the Hebrew faith was a quiet spot on the river bank just outside the city. The apostles found their way to this place on the Sabbath. Their missionary work began with a small company of devout women. The first of Paul's converts on the continent of Europe was Lydia, a saleswoman of purple cloth and a native of the foreign city of Thyatira. Like Luke himself, she had previously become identified with that group of religiously-minded Greeks who, through their contact with Judaism, had come to be known as the worshipers of God.[3] The Philippian church, to which Paul afterward wrote one of his most intimately personal and priceless letters, was largely composed of Gentile members. It was, in all probability, a small church. Its members became, with the passing years, particularly devoted to the apostle. Their sacrifices

[1] The famous "we" passages are the following: XVI:10–17; XX:5–15; XXI:1–18; XXVII:1–XXVIII:16.

[2] See in this connection Ramsay in "St. Paul the Traveller," p. 203.

[3] Literally the "God-fearers." Two other women who may, at this time, have heard and accepted the gospel message were Euodia and Syntyche (Phil. IV:25 and IV:3).

for him were regarded by Paul as a beautiful monument to Christian charity. Every circumstance points to the suggestion that the bond of affection which united Paul and his Philippian church was that of suffering. The Christians at Philippi were often persecuted; but, like their apostolic leader, they had learned how to transform affliction into an opportunity for spiritual growth.

Paul's first experience of persecution on European soil was not long delayed. It came as the consequence of the first contact of the Christian gospel with degenerate paganism. As in the case of Lydia, Luke centers the story upon a familiar theme. Christianity is visualized by him as the providential agent for the emancipation of woman. The central figure in the scene is a young girl whom greed and pagan superstition have made their unhappy victim. The situation is made doubly tragic by the fact that her enslavement is in part the result of her own gift. The spirit of divination, which is believed to possess her, is in reality a proficiency in the comparatively secret art of ventriloquism.[1] The girl has somehow heard of Paul's preaching. Her faith in his message proves that she is sane. She lacks, however, the power that would set her free. Then Paul speaks to her. She becomes a believer in Jesus. She begins a new life. But her freedom spells disaster to her owners. Paul's religion is found to be a menace to their pagan business. Together with Silas, he is arrested and imprisoned. Midnight comes, and the apostles, instead of nursing their wounds, are found praising God. They have received stripes; but, in return for them, they give songs. The prison witnesses the scene of a providential miracle. The gospel has broken down its pagan barriers. The shackles fall, the light shines, the Roman jailer becomes a penitent believer. The apostles are not only freed but honored. The doors of the empire appear now to be widely open to the Gospel of Jesus. After a brief sojourn in the house of Lydia, where, in all probability, a little company of the new converts have gathered to bid farewell to Paul, the apostles make their quiet departure.

[1] The Greeks called such an oracular gift or spirit a Python.

Paul's next missionary field was in Thessalonica.[1] The city, in its ancient fame, rivaled Saloniki, its modern successor. It was the generally recognized Macedonian metropolis. The harbor in which it was located,[2] its majestic elevation, its commercial prominence, and its successful patronage of learning and culture, gave it an importance rivaling that of Corinth. Thessalonica was a free city with its own independent form of government. Herodotus had written of it more than four centuries before; Xerxes had once occupied it on his journey of conquest into Greece; and, in a more recent time, Cicero had lived there as an exile.

Being cosmopolitan, the population of Thessalonica included a strong representative colony of Jews. It was among his own kinsmen, therefore, that Paul began his work of evangelism. As elsewhere, the open door to them was the synagogue. There the apostle spent the first Sabbaths engaged in a form of religious discourse particularly pleasing to his new Hebrew acquaintances. He reasoned with them concerning questions pertaining to the fulfilment of Scripture. Beginning, according to his custom before a Jewish congregation, with Old Testament prophecy, he drew a graphic picture first of Israel's national career, then of its Messianic hope, and finally of the realization of that hope in the timely advent, the public ministry, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Jesus. The manner of Paul's preaching was spontaneous and free. Its note of evangelism was the promise of spiritual and eternal life obtainable through fellowship with the risen Christ.[3] The result was all that could be expected. Among the converts the smaller number were Jews; the greater success was among the devout Greeks who were recognized as adherents of the synagogue. Added to the latter group there was a considerable company of prominent and noble women.

[1] The distance from Philippi to Amphipolis was about thirty miles; Apollonia was thirty more miles to the south; Thessalonica lay forty miles further west.

[2] It was situated at the head of the Thermaic Gulf.

[3] Acts XIII:15–42 is an excellent example of the Jewish type of sermon preached by Paul. Acts XIV:14–18 and XVII:22–31 are types of his method of discourse to Gentiles.

The consequences, however, of Paul's ministry in Thessalonica did not end there. The usual persecution followed, this time, as formerly in Galatia, under Jewish leadership. The incentive to hostility, as before, was a jealous fear for the future life of Judaism. The Judaizers in this instance did not hesitate to make base use of a mob of criminal loafers lying in wait in the city for the opportune moment of a violent uprising. The assault upon the house of Jason failed to put Paul and Silas into their hands. Vengeance, thus unsatisfied, found a further outlet. Jason himself, together with certain other innocent brethren, was arrested. The charge against them, before the magistrates of the city, was preposterous. It was not Paul or Jason, but the Judaizers themselves who had caused the popular uproar. Nevertheless they were uttering a truth beyond their own momentary power of comprehension when they contended that the work of these Christian evangelists was not to be taken lightly. They were indeed liberating a spiritual power which was even then beginning to "turn the world upside down." Jason was released after he had given bond to insure the city against a recurrence of the uprising. Paul's work, however, was done. He no longer felt free to expose Jason to the risks of his proffered hospitality. Moreover, the state of popular agitation within the city was not conducive to further good results in Christian evangelism. Accordingly, without delaying even for the night, he set out upon his journey toward Berea. A delegation of faithful disciples accompanied Paul and Silas out of the city. Daybreak found them safely on the road to a new and hospitable field of evangelistic service.[1]

The Bereans welcomed the apostles with open hands. The Jews there were a noble minded Scripture-reading group of men and women. Paul preached the gospel among them with unusual encouragement and freedom. Many believed, both Jews and Greeks. The Gentile converts included a goodly number of men and women of high estate, probably persons belonging to the noble philosophical school of the Stoics. Sopater, one among

[1] Among the converts at Thessalonica, two are later mentioned as faithful coworkers with Paul. They are Aristarchus and Secundus. See Acts XX:4 and XXVII:2.

them, is later mentioned by name as an active leader in the Berean church and, for a time, a missionary associate of Paul.[1] When the usual persecution set in, prompted in this case by instigators from Thessalonica, Paul did not wait to invite an uproar. Leaving Silas and Timothy quietly to continue the work of teaching the new converts, he left the city. Again friends accompanied him, some of them to the sea coast, others as far as Athens.

Paul's Macedonian ministry was now ended. It had lasted the greater portion of a year.[2] The period had been one of fruitful service for which the apostle was being rewarded by the joyous realization that the Greek world was eagerly receiving and responding to the call of the Christian gospel. The field which now called him was the southerly province of Achaia. He was eager that two cities there might have an opportunity of hearing the message of Jesus. One of them was the metropolis of Greek culture, the other of Greek commerce. They were Athens and Corinth.

II. ACHAIA

The distance from Berea to Athens was about two hundred miles. Paul apparently made the journey by land, traveling first to the Thessalian coast where the celebrated Mt. Olympus overlooks the Ægean, and thence along the water's edge to his destination. Finding himself alone in Athens, and awaiting the arrival of Silas and Timothy, he made a tour of the city. What he saw there filled him first with wonder, then with grief. He was unmistakably awed by the city's magnificence. Athens had for centuries past been the shrine of artists and philosophers. On the Acropolis stood the Parthenon, the temple dedicated to a people's love of beauty. Opposite it, and separated from it by a narrow but deep natural depression, rose the Areopagus, or Hill of Mars, the seat of the Athenian court of justice. Near by was the Agora, the municipal meeting place for scholars, travelers,

[1] Acts XX:4.
[2] I. e., 49–50 A. D.

and curious idlers. At the east end of the city was the magnificent stadium, representative of the Greek interest in recreation and athletics. Paul, himself a scholar and an enthusiast for healthful physical activity, must have felt himself to be at least partly at home in this new western atmosphere. One characteristic, however, of Athenian life particularly impressed him. It was undeniably religious. There were in it evidences of a spiritual hunger which its philosophy and its art, however noble, could not satisfy. Stoicism expounded an exalted moral ideal, but left the individual to self-dependence and therefore spiritually isolated and tragically helpless. The æsthetic impulse deepened the life of the emotions, thereby intensifying man's capacity for suffering without holding out the hope of a perfect or a future life. The mystery religions, as we have heretofore stated, had made marked gain in general popularity, but were, to the more cultivated Greeks, morally inadequate. The old mythology, too, stood condemned on moral grounds. The speculative trend was, accordingly, more and more toward religious uncertainty. No more significant monument to this trend could have been erected by the Athenians than their "altar to an unknown god."

Paul's experience in Athens led him into profound meditation. Presently, with his spirit stirring within him, he sought the city market place and there reasoned openly with both the Stoics and the Epicureans. Some who heard him pronounced him a babbler, a mere smatterer; [1] others inferred from his frequent mention of Jesus and the resurrection—terms interpreted by them as the names of divinities—that he had come among them to add to their already illustrious pantheon two additional and strange gods. In a few days he had attracted enough attention to be either invited or summoned before the council of the Areopagus. Paul's address which followed was a literary and philosophical masterpiece. It revealed a depth of religious insight and a cosmopolitan outlook that greatly interested his hearers. But it won very few converts. It was learned and conciliatory, but lacked the dominant evangelistic note elsewhere characteristic of the apostle's preaching. Paul was himself not altogether

[1] Acts XVII:18. The Greek word here used is spermologos, i. e., "seed-picker."

pleased with it if we may judge from words of his own which he later wrote to the [1] Christians in Corinth. Time had since then taught him that the power of the gospel lay not in the "excellency of speech or of wisdom" with which it might be proclaimed, but in the moral certainty and passionate devotion of the men who testified to the death and resurrection of Jesus. The apostle's sojourn in Athens was not without favorable evangelistic results. Dionysius the Areopagite became a convert; so also did a woman named Damaris.[2] But we do not read of an Athenian church, and no letter of Paul addressed to the first of his converts in Achaia survives to enrich the literary treasury of the New Testament.

It had from the first been Paul's plan to remain in Athens only long enough to await the arrival of Timothy and Silas. A pressing need in the Macedonian churches was apparently detaining them. Accordingly, without further delay, Paul set out for Corinth. The distance of the journey was about fifty miles. Corinth was the political and commercial metropolis of Greece. No city in the west was more strategically located. Situated on an isthmus which connected upper and lower Achaia, it had two harbors, one receiving trade from the east, the other from the west. It was thus in the very gateway of commerce between Italy and Asia Minor. Like most centers of Paul's missionary activity, Corinth was a Roman colony. Julius Cæsar had elevated it to this rank two years before his death. The city teemed with the life of an industrial and traveling population. Here East met West, not only for an interchange of wealth and ideas, but in social contacts which resulted in an intermingling of characteristic racial vices. Corinth had a reputation of being as corrupt as it was cosmopolitan. It offered Paul, therefore, a peculiarly needy and promising field for evangelistic endeavor. The moral challenge it presented was to test the power of the Christian Gospel; the transient population of the city, if the

[1] I Cor. II:1–4. Paul here views in retrospect his departure from Athens and the beginning of his ministry in Corinth.

[2] Her name indicates that she was a foreigner, perhaps "one of the class of the educated Hetairai." If I Cor. XVI:15 refers to Paul's work in Athens, Stephanas and his household are also to be included in the number of converts.

apostle's venture succeeded, would carry the gospel news to the ends of the empire.

Paul's decision to settle temporarily in Corinth kept him there one and one-half years. His residence with Aquila and Priscilla, lately come from Rome,[1] favored the continuance of his stay. The opportunity to work at the loom was welcomed by him as a means of earning his own livelihood during the period necessary for the thorough establishment of a permanent metropolitan church. By thus becoming more intimately acquainted with the people among whom he worked, the apostle ceased to be exclusively a traveling evangelist; he became, in addition, both a teacher and a pastor. The step taken by him proved accordingly to be one of extraordinary significance. It marked the beginning of a new stage in his ministry. But it did more: it created, one by one, a series of circumstances which thenceforth made Paul a writer of letters, a pastor at large, a Christian theologian, a contributor to sacred scripture, and, in consequence, an apostle of universal and immortal fame.

Following his usual custom, Paul began his work in Corinth among his own kinsmen. Wishing, apparently, to conciliate and befriend the Jews—in order, according to his plans, to prolong his ministry in the city—he reasoned with them at first mainly upon topics of general religious interest. His appeal was to the Jewish and Greek mind. Many were persuaded to accept his lofty spiritual outlook and his Messianic convictions. Such was the nature of the apostle's activity during a preliminary period. Then an event of great moment occurred with the arrival of Silas and Timothy. They had come directly from Macedonia with a report which must have thrilled Paul through and through. Its content may be easily imagined from subsequent historical developments.[2] Paul's co-workers had helped him to

[1] The expulsion of the Jews from the imperial city occurred in 49 A. D. It is reported by Suetonius who traced its cause to a rising hostility of the Roman Jews toward the Christians. Jews had settled in Rome in growing numbers since 61 B. C. Tiberius expelled some of them in 19 A. D. They were, generally speaking, a great power for righteousness in the city.

[2] Carefully read Acts XVIII:3–5, and note the change which came and overtook the mind and spirit of Paul.

see anew how abundantly his evangelistic efforts in Macedonia were being justified. People by the hundreds, especially among the Gentiles, were freely accepting Christ. Jesus was indeed the Messiah. Boldly, therefore, Paul stood up in the synagogue and made his declaration. His utterances threw the Jewish hearers into an immediate uproar. When they went so far as to blaspheme the name of Jesus, Paul left the synagogue. He did not go far, however, for next door to the synagogue lived Justus, his friend. Justus was a Roman and belonged to the well known group of the "God-fearers." His house became at once a central meeting place for those who desired to hear Paul. Among that number was Crispus, the leader of the adjacent synagogue. His conversion, together with that of his entire household, seems temporarily to have shocked the Jews into silence. Sustained by a vision which vouchsafed him the consoling and unfailing presence of Christ, Paul thereafter continued his Corinthian labors for a period approximating a year and six months.

How Paul worked, under what circumstances, and with how great success, may be inferred from his later Corinthian correspondence.[1] Of particular interest to the reader of these letters is the utter devotion of the man to his mission. He is thoroughly possessed by the spirit of Christ. The gospel of Jesus, even while it is being preached, is being tested in the laboratory of his own individual experience. The hours which his occupation at the loom demand of him are spent in deep meditation. There, keeping time to the orderly movement of a weaver's shuttle as it binds together woof and warp, his thought transforms the experiences he makes into the fabric of a sound and enduring Christian theology. Thus, by a divine providence, the earliest New Testament writings owe their origin to a Cilician tentmaker, who first became a rabbi, then a Christian convert and apostle, and finally an interpreter of the world's greatest living faith to subsequent mankind.

Modern archæology has determined the exact time when

[1] Note, e. g., such autobiographical material as is found in I Cor. XIII and II Cor. X–XIII.

Gallio was proconsul of the Roman province of Achaia. He held the office in 51–52 A. D.[1] This discovered date is of great significance in aiding in the preparation of a chronology of the life of Paul. From it the reckoning is clear that he began his work in Corinth in 50 A. D. The insurrection of the Jews occurred shortly after Gallio's accession to the proconsulship. This was thought to be an opportune time to bring the apostle to trial. The scheme, however, failed signally. Gallio, known as a brother of the famous Stoic philosopher Seneca, was no doubt accustomed to Jewish disputatiousness. The punishment of Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, to whom the Greeks gave a beating on the very porch of the judgment hall, was regrettable. But it was the outcome of a situation which the leaders of the insurrection had themselves created. The incident, though it cannot have pleased Paul, settled for him the problem of further Jewish persecution. Thereafter he worked unmolested, apparently for a considerable time. Then, in order to be in Jerusalem in time for the fulfilment of a vow, he set sail first for Ephesus, and after that for Cæsarea. Following a brief conference with James and Peter, and a short visit with several other friends in the sacred capital, he returned to Antioch.

III. THE THESSALONIAN AND GALATIAN LETTERS

Two letters of Paul call for our attention during this period in apostolic history. They are First and Second Thessalonians, written from Corinth in 51 A. D., and Galatians which followed, probably written from Antioch in 52 A. D. Each of the three letters was the outgrowth of a special circumstance which gave it its central theme. The religious situation in Thessalonica, as reported by Timothy and Silas, was in the main as follows: (1) Paul had been obliged to leave the city unexpectedly and abruptly; (2) while there, he had consoled the new Christian converts with the message of the resurrection; (3) to this word

[1] The discovery was made in 1908. Four broken pieces of stone were found at Delphi in Greece, on which appear the names of Claudius and Gallio, their titles, and the corresponding dates.

of timely comfort he had added his exposition of the Christian ideal of a future spiritual but earthly kingdom, whose foundation was the universal brotherly love; (4) by means of this message of encouragement he had left the Thessalonians in a state of eager speculation and wonder regarding the question of whether or not they should themselves be spared from death by the early advent of Christ's kingdom; and, if so, what hope might further be entertained by them in behalf of those of their own number whom death, in the meantime, had taken from them.

First Thessalonians was Paul's attempt at answering this perplexing and vital question. His aim was by means of it to bring his interrupted ministry in Thessalonica to a more natural completion. The letter conveys the warmth and vigor of Paul's personality. It is written as if he were standing in his readers' intimate presence. It has the spontaneity and immediateness of a one-sided conversation. Three chapters are taken up by Paul in communicating his affectionate greetings, in expressing his appreciation of the church's loyalty, and in giving it his pastoral benediction. These chapters represent Part I of the letter. In Part II, which consists of two remaining chapters, the apostle deals with the Thessalonican problem. The key to its solution, he warns his readers, is not theological speculation, but a morally clean and noble Christian life. Purity, charity, and industry are the daily basic qualities of Christian character.[1] To such as possess them death holds no fear; it is but a falling asleep, a resting until the day when Christ himself shall return to earth.[2] Then, at the call of God, the sleep of the dead shall be broken; they shall arise, to be joined by those who remain alive until that time, and to be thereafter forever with Christ. The exact time of Jesus' advent is uncertain. His coming, however, will be sudden and without warning. Paul's parting word to the Thessalonians, accordingly, is this: "Be prepared."

The second letter to the Thessalonians closely follows the first both in time and in general content. Its individual keynote is, however, almost the exact opposite. From the general

[1] I Thess. IV:7–12.

[2] The nucleus of the message of I Thess. is found in Chap. IV:13–18.

tone of Second Thessalonians it appears that Paul's first letter had been, in its main object, almost too successful. Consoled by the expectancy of Jesus' immediate earthly return, many of the Thessalonian Christians had given up all thought of this world and had put themselves into a mood of readiness for his coming. By so doing they were, according to the apostle, not only delaying the Lord's advent, but disqualifying themselves for participation in the blessings his reign was purposed to bring. Something more than waiting was necessary to assure the establishment of Jesus' kingdom among men. Paul was himself giving stress to this essential requirement by his own evangelistic ministry. Though, at this time, expectant of Jesus' early return to earth, his missionary zeal continued unabated.[1] Whatever the outcome, he regarded the future of the world as being in God's hands. The Christian's task was to look beyond the saving of his own soul to the building of the spiritual and perfect city of God. Thus, reduced to its simplest terms, Paul's message to the readers of Second Thessalonians was this: "Be patient; stand fast in the faith; trust God for the future; eat your own daily bread, and go to work." [2]

Paul's letter to the Galatians is, in the main, an invaluable though fragmentary bit of autobiography. Its literary occasion is implied in every paragraph of its contents. The churches to which it is addressed are those established by the apostle's first missionary journey.[3] The time is the summer of 52 A. D.; it is the interval between the writer's second and third great evangelistic campaigns. Paul's mind is in a state of intense agitation. Timothy, traveling overland from Ephesus through Galatia to Antioch, has reported a disheartening spiritual situation. The Judaizers, whom Paul has supposed to be silenced as a result of the Jerusalem conference, are again at work. Their activity,

[1] A comparison of I Thess. IV:13–18 with Phil. I:21–25 will explain how Paul came later to modify his view regarding this basic primitive Christian doctrine which was clearly an application of the apocalyptic hope of current Messianism applied to the person of Jesus.

[2] Cf. here Jesus' words in the parable of the Ten Virgins, in Matt. XXV:1–13.

[3] The so-called South-Galatian view is here unqualifiedly accepted. See McGiffert, "The Apostolic Age," p. 178; and Wade's "New Testament History," p. 264.

this time, is of a highly aggravated form. Not content with their own Jewish teachings advocating the priority of the law, they are attacking the apostleship and ministry of Paul. In this work they claim the sanction of the apostles James and Peter. Beginning apparently at Antioch [1] they have dogged Paul's footsteps through Cilicia and across the Taurus mountains into Galatia. There, in the very region where he once risked his own life to preach the gospel of Christ, an attempt is being made to discredit him in the eyes of his own converts.

The letter to the Galatians is Paul's answer to these unchristian Judaizers. It falls naturally into three parts, of which the first is autobiographical, the second predominantly theological, the third devotional and practical.[2] The attack against his apostleship Paul refutes with concrete facts sufficient to prove that he has been truly called or commissioned of Christ. The Judaistic argument defending the supremacy of the law is met by his doctrine of justification by faith. For the four-century-old Jewish philosophy of duty he substitutes the Christian gospel of liberty and love. To the Galatian disciples, who abused their freedom in Christ by surrendering to the baser impulses of the flesh, he issues a solemn challenge to produce the gracious and imperishable fruits of the spirit. The letter is a masterpiece. It is Paul's spiritual and doctrinal Magna Charta. It reveals both the mind and the manhood of the great apostle.

[1] See Gal. II:11–16.

[2] The three divisions or parts are: (1) Chapters I–II; (2) Chapters III:i–v:12; (3) Chapters V:13–VI:18.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE THIRD MISSIONARY PERIOD

With the Galatian letter dispatched, Paul probably remained in Antioch for a brief period of rest. He hoped thereby to give the Galatians, whom he purposed shortly to revisit, an opportunity to be prepared for his coming. With all his heart he hoped that they would receive him willingly and without embarrassment. Accordingly Paul waited. Then, when he set out from Antioch, he made a rapid overland tour through Cilicia and the territory of Antiochus, following the already familiar route of his second missionary journey, until he entered the region of Galatia. His plan, however, did not permit him to tarry there. Luke records that, having arrived in Galatia, he merely passed through the province, and through the neighboring territory of Phrygia, strengthening the churches that had been established there. No further word of admonition, it is apparent, was needed. The Galatian letter had fulfilled its mission.

Moreover, Paul was by this time under the constraint of a call to a new and hitherto uncultivated field of Christian labor. A promise he had lately made was urgently pressing him to go to Ephesus.[1] Asia was now an open province, and a well traveled road led directly to the harbor metropolis. Ephesus was in all respects a noted city. In size, wealth, and general influence in the empire, it was surpassed only by Rome itself. Like Corinth it was a chief gateway to overland and maritime commerce. Rome governed it only indirectly. From it the Roman proconsul, stationed there, ruled over the province of Asia. Ephesus was, generally speaking, the most important city in which Paul was privileged to establish a Christian church. It was rich; it was a center of culture; it was noted for its harbor, its theater,

[1] Acts XVIII:21.

its stadium, its lecture halls, and its libraries. It was a religious city. The great temple of Diana, one of the architectural wonders of the ancient world, was there. Religion among the Ephesians, however, was primitively and grossly pagan. The oracles of the temple goddess determined the moral and political life of the entire municipality. The temple itself was a place of refuge for fugitives, a treasury of private and public wealth, a frequented shrine to countless religious pilgrims, and the stronghold of a political hierarchy whose power was a determining influence in the daily life of the Ephesians. Again, despite its baseless and degrading superstitions, Ephesus was a cosmopolitan city. Races and religions intermingled freely. Nature cults, Oriental mystery religions, Greek philosophy, and Judaism were alike represented and broadly tolerated. Never had Paul found so fertile a field for the planting of the seed of Christian truth; never so compounded a spiritual soil, nor so difficult a task for the gospel sower.

I. PAUL'S MINISTRY AT EPHESUS

Paul was not the first actually to preach Jesus to the people of Ephesus. He had, upon his arrival, already been preceded by the learned and eloquent Apollos who, though a Jew, was a native Alexandrian, and, at the time, a devoted disciple of John the Baptist. When Apollos came to Ephesus, he had apparently either not heard of Jesus or had not come to identify him as the promised Messiah. His early message was based upon the prophetic teachings of John, which he interpreted allegorically according to the characteristic method of the Alexandrian school. During this preliminary period of his ministry, Apollos was heard by Aquila and Priscilla, who, at the close of Paul's labors in Corinth, had accompanied him on his homeward journey to Ephesus.[1] These two faithful Christians instructed Apollos in the great truth of the Messiahship of Jesus. Thereafter this new and gifted Christian disciple left Ephesus for Corinth where his evangelistic labors were crowned with im-

[1] Acts XVIII:18–19.

mediate and unusual success. So successful, indeed, was Apollos in the Achaian metropolis that before long the number of his loyal disciples openly rivaled that of Paul.[1]

Paul's first task in Ephesus was to give Christian instruction to the twelve disciples whom Apollos had gathered about him during his residence in the city. Then he turned, as he had hitherto never failed to do, to the work of evangelizing his own Hebrew kinsmen. His three months' labor among them met with the usual response. They were interested in his reasoning, but opposed to his efforts at persuading them to turn to Christ. This opposition seems not to have seriously disturbed Paul. It was what he anticipated. His visits to the Jewish synagogue had, by this time, come to have little more than a formal significance. They served the apostle as a means of access to an unknown community, and aided him in fulfilling a traditional and at the same time deep-felt racial obligation.

A larger opportunity offered itself when Paul secured the use of the famous lecture hall of Tyrannus. By that act, which reflects his genius both as a public leader and as a philosopher, the apostle stepped out of the synagogue into the world. He became at once a dramatic figure. His noble reasoning immediately gained him friends and public acknowledgment. Thus auspiciously begun, his work continued with increasing success for two years. The hall of Tyrannus was open to Paul from eleven until four o'clock in the afternoon of each day.[2] The early hours of the morning were spent by him at the loom, earning his own livelihood. The period in the hall was devoted to evangelistic preaching, to the teaching of Christian converts, to the training of associate missionaries, and to conferences with assistant leaders both from Ephesus and from outlying cities in the Asiatic province. Paul's work in the evening was probably to go from house to house in the city and to visit the mourning, the sick, and such other persons as were in particular need of his ministrations.[3]

[1] See I Cor. I:12.

[2] The hours are specifically mentioned in the MS. Codex Bezæ.

[3] Through these men from the province Paul was able, as the months passed, to

The list of Paul's converts in Ephesus and Asia was unusually large. Some of them were Jews; the majority, however, were Gentiles. The last chapter of the letter to the Romans contains a succession of familiar names which are almost positively to be associated with Paul's Ephesian ministry.[1] The number of persons of later renown, mentioned in this Pauline fragment, indicates clearly the magnitude of the apostle's missionary enterprise in the province of Asia. Never before had he faced so great an evangelistic opportunity; never had the gospel of Jesus working through him, wrought so illustriously and mightily. Writing to the Corinthian church during this time Paul said: "A great door and effectual is opened unto me." [2] But he was obliged, in the same moment, to add: "And there are many adversaries." Referring in the same letter to the opposition which he had already encountered, he wrote: "I fought with beasts at Ephesus." [3] Did Paul mean by these words that he had at one time actually been compelled to fight in the theater or open arena? Probably not. His influential friends in Ephesus, and a recognition of his Roman citizenship would, in the event of a sudden crisis, quite certainly have saved him from such a fate.[4] Who, then, were these implacable enemies of the apostle? Luke's account suggests that they were of two classes: (1) the plotting, or more specifically, the exorcising Jews; and (2) mob-spirited Artemis-worshiping Gentiles. Both groups alike were the victims of religious superstition, a dreadful scourge throughout the ancient world. Paul was not afraid in the midst of even the greatest danger. Though eager to live, he was momently prepared to die for the cause now so dear to his own heart. How

reach such prominent centers of population as Laodicea, Colossæ, Hierapolis, Philadelphia, Sardis, Pergamos, and Thyatira—cities which, in later apostolic history, came to occupy positions of strategic importance in the spread of the Christian Gospel. See Revelation, Chapters I–IV.

[1] Rom. XVI is now quite generally regarded as a surviving remnant of a letter written by Paul to the Ephesians.

[2] I Cor. I:8.

[3] I Cor. XV:32. Cf. II Cor. I:8.

[4] Acts XIX:30 shows how well Paul was protected by his friends. Paul, moreover, makes no mention of such a struggle, in the list of the hardships recorded in II Cor. XI:23 f.

close, indeed, he came to Christian martyrdom in this pagan city is told by the apostle himself in the last of his surviving Corinthian letters.[1]

The peril which Paul faced at the hands of the exorcisers was fortunately averted. The sons of Sceva cast spells upon men in the name of Jesus, but, at the critical moment, they were themselves not equal to the power which that name had come to signify to those who had heard Paul. The result tended to make the apostle's preaching more popular than ever before. But it can scarcely have been the kind of popularity which Paul desired. The basis of his appeal in presenting Christ to a congregation of hearers was not the psychology of the masses, but the self-conscious spiritual nature and the moral character of the human individual. Paul himself was not a religious demagogue, but a builder; he besought men everywhere to present themselves to Christ for wholehearted, but at the same time, reasonable self-sacrificial service.[2]

A more serious opposition to Paul's work in Ephesus arose from pagan sources. Artemis,[3] the renowned goddess of the Ephesians, might tolerate lesser or servile divinities, but she could brook no rival. Her supremacy was regarded as incontestable. Any circumstance which failed to uphold this time-honored tradition was viewed with skeptical hostility. Paul's preaching was now to be classed in that category. It was arousing city-wide interest and endangering the stability of the hierarchical order. The crisis came when religion interposed a barrier to the success of a lucrative business. Paul's message concerning the spiritual character of God was slowly removing the foundations of idol worship. It was high time for Demetrius to intervene and to call a meeting of the guild of Ephesian silversmiths. What mattered the truth of what Paul preached if it threatened the ruin of their trade! The outlying districts of the province, too, were hearing the gospel. Wherever, therefore, throughout Asia, a home became Christian, the idol industry lost a patron. Quick

[1] II Cor. I:8–10.
[2] Rom. XII:1.
[3] The Romans worshiped her under the name of Diana.

action was necessary to save the day. The mob on the congested city streets was ever ready for its part in a demonstration of violence. In an incredibly short time Ephesus was in uproar. In their confusion certain men of the crowd laid violent hands on Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's Macedonian friends. The voice of Alexander, who rose to defend the conduct and position of the Jews, was drowned in shouting and riots. For two hours the pagan cry resounded in the city square: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." When, quieted by the town clerk, the mob had disbanded, Paul knew that his work in Ephesus was done.

Accordingly, bidding the faithful converts and leaders of the now well established Ephesian church an affectionate farewell, he set out for Macedonia. His journey thither was by way of Troas where he remained long enough to tell the story of the gospel.[1] In Macedonia he was met by Titus, who had been sent from Ephesus to Corinth on a mission associated with Paul's Corinthian correspondence. After a period of rest and fellowship with Christian friends, probably in Philippi, Paul proceeded to Achaia. From all appearances he took up temporary residence in Corinth. Since the beginning of his third missionary journey Paul had written the Corinthian Christians four letters.[2] Each of them had grown out of circumstances which shall presently receive our attention. At length, with all the Corinthian difficulties amicably settled, Paul devoted himself to the singular task of addressing a letter to a church he had not yet visited. The result was the epistle to the Romans.

II. THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

With his work in Corinth completed, he planned, by a direct route, to set sail for Syria. It was his wish to be in Jerusalem at Pentecost which, Paul remembered, was the anniversary of the birth of the church.[3] Plotting Jews, however, forced him to change his course and to retrace his steps through Macedonia.

[1] II Cor. II:12.

[2] Paul may possibly have paid Corinth a short visit during his sojourn in Ephesus. II Cor. XII:14 and XIII:1–12, at any rate, indicate that such was his plan. Upon second thought Paul may have decided to send Timothy in his stead.

[3] It was now the spring of 56 A. D.

The roundabout course meant a delay that could not have pleased Paul. The cause of his anxiety was two-fold. First, having written a letter to Rome and prepared the Christians there for his coming, he wished now to reach them at the earliest possible moment. The church in the imperial city, though already well established, needed his presence and the influence of his Christian teaching. Upon his early arrival and continued work there would depend, to a great extent, the future course of Christianity in the Roman empire. The Judaizing agitators were still energetically at work, particularly in Rome, where Paul's message of evangelism had not as yet been openly heard. What if, indeed, Paul should himself never be allowed to carry this message to the metropolis of the empire? That the apostle had misgivings concerning his anticipated journey to Rome is apparent from his introduction to the Roman epistle.[1] These misgivings constituted a further cause of deep anxiety. The situation which was to confront Paul upon his arrival in Jerusalem was not a pleasant one. Reports of the mother church's gradual lapse into Judaism were reaching him from every quarter. The open hostility of the Jews, too, was to be reckoned with. What Paul had been saying in the synagogues of the dispersion had aroused the orthodox Jewish leaders to intense hatred. Still he felt that he must go to Jerusalem and, if possible, effect there a reconciliation, before setting out on his journey to Rome.

One bright ray of hope, however, penetrated the darkened prospect. Paul was not going to Jerusalem alone. The seven men who were to accompany him were among the noblest of his Gentile converts.[2] Their Christian characters, at least, would commend them to James and Peter, even if Paul's theological position were misunderstood. The offering, in the form of a liberal collection which they were bringing with them, would, Paul was confident, be accepted by the needy mother church as a token of their genuine affection and sincerity. Accordingly,

[1] Rom. I:8–14.

[2] The seven delegates were Sopater from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy from Lystra, and Tychicus and Trophimus from Ephesus. See Acts XXI:29, Col. IV:7, and II Tim. IV:20.

when Paul turned northward toward Macedonia, it was with the understanding that his associates should meet him at Troas. They did so, traveling by ship across the Ægean. At Philippi Paul was met and joined by Luke who thereafter became his intimate companion, first on the way to Jerusalem, and later on the journey to Rome.

Paul and his company remained in Troas seven days. Arrangements were made there for a religious meeting, and the apostle was invited to speak. The scene of the late gathering in the upper room—the eager crowd, the blazing torches, Paul's prolonged discourse, the youth overcome by sleep, his sudden fall from the window and his restoration at the hands of the apostle, the midnight meal, probably concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist; [1] then the continued conversation until break of day, the farewell words and the meeting's adjournment followed by Paul's immediate departure—is one of the most picturesque and typical in the annals of Luke.

The journey, now resumed, necessitated tedious coastwise travel and frequent delays.[2] After three days' sailing, the travelers found their ship anchored at the Asiatic seaport Miletus. Again a scene follows in the narrative of Luke which offers the reader a vivid picture of the personality of Paul drawn against a background of the Christian life as it was lived in the middle of the first century. It reveals the apostle in his true character as an evangelist, a pastor, a teacher, a prophet, a toiler, a man of courage, a man of prayer, a noble companion, and an affectionate and loyal friend.[3] Standing in the midst of his company of faithful Ephesian elders, who are in awe of him and yet love him, Paul rises before us invested with a nobility of spirit and moral character which, except for the matchless life of Jesus, is unparalleled in human history.

[1] See I Cor. XI:17–34.

[2] Paul, going by land, met his companions at the southerly seaport Assos, twenty miles from Troas. Thence the ship set out for Mytilene on the island of Lesbos. The next stop was at the mainland opposite the island Chios. From there the company reached another island called Samos. On the following day they arrived at Miletus.

[3] Acts XX:18–38 is, indeed, a rare human document. In it Paul lays bare his soul to the searching eyes of the world.

The remainder of the voyage as far as Tyre was uneventful.[1] Tyre was an influential harbor city. The unloading and loading of cargo kept them in the port for seven days. Now on Syrian soil, Paul received with interest many bits of news concerning life in the Jewish capital. What he heard was far from encouraging. From outward appearances he seemed to have very few friends in the city. The Christian disciples there, gravitating more and more toward Judaism, regarded his views with increased misgiving and mistrust. Within the circle of orthodox Jewry, where he had once been a strong Pharisaic leader, his name was now held in execration. He was believed to be the heretical exponent of a form of Gentile Christianity that derived its principal characteristics from an absorption of pagan culture. Religiously he was deemed an enemy of the law; racially a traitor.

The Christians at Tyre warned Paul against setting foot on Judean territory. Then they accompanied him to the shore where, kneeling around him on the sand, they joined him in prayer. Like Jesus himself, Paul set his face resolutely to go to Jerusalem, though his heart was filled with forebodings of what might befall him. An additional brief journey brought the little company of missionaries to Cæsarea. Here, while resting in the house of Philip the evangelist, Paul was again met with a word of warning. Agabus, a Judean prophet who had already been heard on an earlier occasion,[2] was the spokesman. He prophesied the certain and immediate arrest of Paul upon his arrival in the capital city. The tearful entreaty of his friends all but crushed Paul. But he held firmly to his resolve, declaring himself ready, if need be, to die for the liberty of the gospel of Christ. The anticipated event was not long in coming to fulfilment. Paul's appearance in Jerusalem was received as a signal for widespread alarm. Before a week had passed, he had been mobbed in the temple, arrested, and imprisoned. From that time

[1] The places touched in succession were the small island of Cos, the larger island of Rhodes, the seaport Patora, Myra (according to Codex Bezæ) and then Tyre.

[2] See Acts XI:23.

forward he was a prisoner, first in Jerusalem, then in Cæsarea, and finally in Rome.

III. THE CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE

The Corinthians had received Paul's gospel with open and hungry hearts. The promising field for missionary work had kept the apostle in the city for a year and a half. By the end of that period a self-governing and growing church had been firmly established. Corinth was, however, a pagan and licentious city. Its evil reputation was known to every traveler. Paul's new Christian converts could not hope wholly to escape its contaminating influence. They very early learned that conversion alone could not settle for them all future moral problems. Religious instruction was required to guide them particularly in finding a Christian answer to the pressing social questions with which they were daily confronted. The institution of marriage, popularly upon a low moral plane, needed the hand of Paul to establish it upon a Christian foundation. Womanhood, subjected to pitiful degradation, looked longingly and hopefully to him for the freedom which the gospel promised. Factions within the church called for immediate attention. Already the ideal of Christian unity or brotherhood was endangered by the rise of three parties or sects, each of which laid claim to its own right to ecclesiastical priority. Boldly, and with caste spirit, they declared themselves to be of the party of Apollos, of Peter, or of Paul.[1] Troublesome doubts, moreover, had arisen, following Paul's departure from Corinth, regarding certain central doctrines of Paul's gospel. Two of them, in particular, presented serious difficulties. They were the doctrines of the resurrection and of the Holy Spirit. The apostle's interpretation of these basic truths of Christianity are embodied in two classic chapters of First Corinthians: the one an immortal

[1] See I Cor. III:2. I Cor. I:12 suggests that there was a fourth sect which spoke of itself as the party of Christ. If such a group existed, it was probably eclectic, aiming at combined unity of the teachings of the other three groups.

hymn to love; the other a triumphant pæan in tribute to immortality.[1]

While pursuing his evangelistic labors in Ephesus, Paul had been kept informed, both orally and in writing, concerning the situation in the Corinthian church.[2] It appears also, from significant references in Second Corinthians that Paul himself had paid the Christians there a hurried visit.[3] In addition, both Timothy and Titus had been sent by Paul in order to ascertain how the Corinthian Christians fared. The apostle was, accordingly, well informed of their needs. This intimacy is everywhere reflected in the Corinthian letters. More than any others of the Pauline writings, they afford us an insight into the struggle which attended the planting and growth of the Christian gospel on pagan soil. They are likewise the most characteristically autobiographical of Paul's letters. The spiritual passion of the Galatian letters is in them, reinforced by the mature judgment and theological genius of the later epistle to the Romans.

The surviving Corinthian correspondence represents a collection of four letters.[4] Three of them were written from Ephesus; the fourth from Macedonia.[5] The first was actually no more than a brief note. Paul's own later reference to it suggests its theme.[6] A fragment of it survives in the disconnected paragraph found in Second Corinthians VI:14–VII:1. The aim of the letter was to warn the Christians in Corinth against intimate association with unbelievers, evil doers, and moral degenerates. The second letter was written as an especially prepared reply to a group of written questions which the leading men of the church had forwarded to Paul. Its entire content is

[1] The two chapters are I Cor. XIII and XV.

[2] In I Cor. VII:1 Paul wrote: "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote me." Oral reports had come through a renowned Corinthian woman named Chloe (I Cor. I:11), through Stephanas and through Fortunatus, (I Cor. VI:17) whom the Corinthians had officially sent to Paul. See also I Cor. I:16 and I Cor. XVI:15.

[3] II Cor. XII:14 and XIII:1 refer to a third journey to Corinth. The history of the Acts records only one visit to Corinth up to this time in the missionary career of Paul.

[4] Some scholars see in II Cor. VIII–IX an additional or fifth letter.

[5] The approximate date for them is 55 A. D.

[6] The reference is found in I Cor. V:9.

that of First Corinthians. The epistle falls generally into two parts.[1] The first may be termed a rebuke delivered by Paul against three Corinthian evils: (1) quarrelsome factional divisions; (2) gross sexual sin; (3) litigation in Gentile courts. Part Two contains Paul's answers to the Corinthian questions, arranged under six important topics: (1) marriage; (2) food offered to idols; (3) the public decorum of Christian women; (4) the Lord's Supper; (5) the gifts of the Spirit; (6) the doctrine of the resurrection. First Corinthians is an extraordinary document of spiritual revelation and moral philosophy. As one reads it chapter by chapter, its central theme becomes increasingly apparent. Paul is here glorying in his exaltation of the ideal of Jesus in its bearing upon the individual and communal life of the Corinthian Christians. In words, approximately Paul's own, its message may be summed up in this simple sentence: "Have the mind of Christ in all things."

The third Corinthian letter is of a radically different character. Its background reveals a new and changed situation. Sorrow has overtaken Paul. He writes, according to his own later statement,[2] "out of much affliction and with many tears." The content of this message has been preserved for us in Second Corinthians X–XIII.[3] Its circumstances and aim may readily be construed from the general historical background. A brief analysis reveals them to have been the following. At the time when Paul was writing First Corinthians and starting it on its way, probably by Titus, he had already sent Timothy to Corinth to prepare the Christians there for the letter's arrival, and thereafter to return to Ephesus with a report concerning the manner in which it had been received.[4] From ensuing events it is plain that the Corinthians were offended by Paul's rebuke of

[1] (1) Chapters I–VI; (2) Chapters VII–XVI.

[2] II Cor. II:4.

[3] The striking contrast between II Cor.; I–IX and X–XIII is apparent. Cf., e. g., VII:9–16 with XIII:2. Is it possible that both could have been written at the same time? The first nine chapters are full of cheer, thanksgiving, and commendation; the last four express sorrow, passion, denunciation, bitter disappointment, and pathetic appeal.

[4] See I Cor. IV:17 and XVI:10. Also II Cor. VII:6.

their factionalism and gross moral laxity. Timothy's mission, in turn, proved unsuccessful. Then, it appears, Paul himself may have made an immediate journey to Corinth. If so, he was unprepared for the experience he encountered upon his arrival. A group of leaders in the church met him with open and heartless insult.[1] The suddenness of the injury overwhelmed Paul. Heartsick and depressed he returned to Ephesus. Then, after a period of reflection, his courage returned to him. He became a tower of strength. Tender passion and fiery indignation wrought together in the creation of the third epistle which he forthwith dispatched to the Corinthian community. Boldly he told them that, though they might be ashamed of him, he was still their apostle. They were the fruit of his missionary toil. If he had failed, they were themselves the pathetic proof of that failure. To trumpet his defeat, therefore, would mean nothing more than to parade their own disgrace. Why all this inglorious display? Fortunately, however, for them Paul knew that he was not self-deceived. He had long since fully endured the test of his Christian discipleship. His ministry was, he was certain, approved by Christ himself whose partner Paul had become in the holy fellowship of redemptive suffering. Though forcibly driven, in this letter, to an apology in his own behalf, Paul remained reverently humble. He remembered his weaknesses. By means of them he was taught the grace of loving forgiveness. Accordingly, his soul longed to give itself anew to his once loyal but now temporarily misdirected converts. At the close of his letter he tendered them his affectionate farewell, and gave them, though they might not welcome it, his apostolic benediction.

Having sent Titus, as before, to deliver the Corinthian letter, Paul resumed his work in Ephesus, anxiously awaiting the result. The period which followed proved to be one of grave suspense. Titus, for some reason, was delayed. Paul was in extreme heaviness of spirit. Ill health, too, added its toll to the already crushing weight upon him. Then, suddenly, Ephesus was turned into uproar, and his labors in that city were at an end. The sense of tragedy must have settled upon Paul as he left

[1] II Cor. II:5–7 and VII:12.

the last and greatest of his missionary fields. Were the doors to both Ephesus and Corinth to remain permanently closed to him? Eager to meet Titus he set out for Troas. Having arrived there, and still finding himself alone, he crossed over into Macedonia. There at last the load was lifted. Titus had come with good news for him from Corinth. Paul's letter, he was assured, had brought the Corinthian Christians to their senses. Peace had once more been restored, and Paul was now again their gladly and fully acknowledged apostle. The offender, who had been responsible for most of the apostle's sorrow, had been punished and was now truly repentant. Cheerful once more, and in glad expectancy of his early personal arrival in the city, Paul now wrote his final Corinthian letter. The tone of this tract is throughout one of joy and hope. The writer is at last again fully himself. Love and faith and thanksgiving are the keynotes of his message. The content of the letter is at present found in Second Corinthians I–IX.

IV. THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS

Paul's arrival in Corinth was heartily welcomed. The hospitality for which he had so dearly paid was now doubly comforting. The growth of the church during the period of his absence was abundant proof that his work had not been in vain. By this time, however, the thought of a new field of missionary enterprise was constantly before him. The open door that beckoned again swung westward. As he had once answered the summons in Asia to carry the gospel into Macedonia, so now he heard the call to preach Christ in Rome. In order to prepare the way for his coming, or, in the event he should be forbidden to reach the imperial city, to offer a world-wide testimony to his faith in Christ, he undertook to write his now famous letter to the Romans. Written without pressure or constraint, and during a time of comparative freedom from anxiety, the epistle revealed hidden depths and powers in Paul's nature which had until then been unfathomed. Alike in religious conception, in literary composition and style, and in practical insight into the moral life, it is a masterpiece.

The time when Christianity was first carried into Rome is unknown. Luke tells us that on the day of Pentecost Romans were present in Jerusalem and heard Peter's discourse. The city, since the time of Pompey, in 63 B. C., had come to have a strong Jewish population. Commercial travelers, or visitors in Palestine, had, on their return, brought the gospel with them. Although tradition trustworthily records that Peter visited the Roman capital, it is unlikely that he either led or aided in the establishment of its first Christian church. The epistle was written early in 56 A. D. Its content shows that Paul had been well informed—perhaps by Aquila and Priscilla during the two periods of his labor with them, first in Corinth, then in Ephesus—of the Jewish-Gentile membership of the Roman church. He accordingly anticipated, in the preparation of the epistle, a religious situation with which he had, during his evangelistic career in the east, become intimately familiar. This fact accounts for both the dominant Jewish element and the strong argumentative note present in a letter addressed to Christians in the Gentile capital.

The epistle has a distinct theme. Paul sets it forth in the first chapter in these words: "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Analytically the contents of the letter fall into two main sections.[1] The first is a carefully prepared outline of Christian doctrine. The second may properly be called a primer of Christian conduct. In the doctrinal part of the epistle Paul's thought is noticeably moving to and fro between two supremely significant polar conceptions: looking into the past, he views with perspective the historical and spiritual limitations of the Judaistic law; turning his face toward the future, he sees, in a vision, the world-wide redemption and universal kingdom of mankind made possible by the cross and the resurrection of Jesus.

Three statements, when analyzed in the presence of the open epistle, may be regarded as a fit summary of its general message.

[1] (1) Chapters I–XI; (2) Chapters XII–XV. Chapter XVI is an appendix. It is generally believed to be a short letter of salutations and greetings sent by Paul to the church at Ephesus.

1. The essence of religion is harmony with God. Sin has been the universal destroyer of harmonious human relationships. The essence of sin is disobedience. Herein both the Jew and the Gentile have failed, and are therefore equally guilty of offense against God. It is true that historically the Jew has had the advantage; he has had the law to aid him in developing a deeper consciousness of sin and hunger for righteousness. Nevertheless, Jewish dependence upon the law has failed as signally as has pagan reliance upon natural human goodness in man's long and wearisome struggle to attain inner and abiding peace with God. Such a state of spiritual tranquillity can be attained only through faith. Faith, according to Paul, is a mystically satisfying and morally transforming experience of human fellowship with God. The way of faith was the way chosen by Abraham, long before the age of Moses and the law. History's consummate revelation of faith is the perfect life of Jesus.

2. Companionship with Christ not only secures man's peace and union with God, but awakens in him a new life through the indwelling of the promised Holy Spirit. The new life thus begun finds expression in acts of loving self-sacrificial service. It is a life of power. Its immediate end is the creation of a genuinely Christlike character. Its ultimate goal is a radiant individual immortality.

3. Consecrated Christian service has a remarkable transformative influence upon human society.[1] It is through the ministry of spiritually regenerated and Christ-minded men that God will one day realize his purpose of a glorious future for all the races of mankind. Man is therefore to be a co-laborer with God. The Christian's philosophy of life should be one of wholesome confidence in the coming of a greater and better day. Paul's social message to his day and ours may be summed up in these few concise words: Be brothers in Christ.

[1] See especially Rom. XII:1–2.

CHAPTER XXXII

PAUL'S LAST YEARS

When Paul reached Jerusalem at the close of his third missionary journey, he was for the moment gladly received. The good news that the name of Jesus was being glorified by the lips of Gentiles caused joy among the apostolic leaders. The collection, too, when handed over to James and Peter as a gift from Paul's churches, contributed to this first outburst of welcome. Presently, however, a feeling of anxiety, hitherto suppressed, came to the surface. It was the unmistakable sign that Paul was being regarded with suspicion by the large majority of the Jerusalem Christians. His Gentile gospel was looked upon by them as a threatening heresy. The primitive church, it was evident, was fast becoming conservative and in danger of losing its actual identity through reabsorption into Judaism. James, now its authorized official, while personally friendly to Paul, was at no time in enthusiastic sympathy with his missionary program. Peter and John, who by reason of their personal discipleship with Jesus, possessed a truer insight into the meaning of the New Testament gospel, later found it either advantageous or necessary to leave Jerusalem in order to continue their Christian labors.

Paul himself regarded this growing spirit of alienation apprehensively. It threatened his ideal of the organic unity of the church, which he sought to conserve at any price. When, accordingly, he visited the temple together with four impoverished members of the Jerusalem church, personally bearing for them the burden of expense involved in the fulfilment of a religious vow, it was with the hope that, by means of this act of concession to the prejudices of the Jerusalem leaders, he might yet be able to heal the breach that was fast developing to separate Jew-

ish from Gentile Christianity. Paul was to be disappointed. The crisis which followed determined that the future of Christianity was not to be in the hands of the Palestinian church. The riot, it is true, was precipitated by Asiatic Jews; but we do not read that the apostolic leaders came to Paul's rescue. Their helplessness or disinterest left him to his fate.

The accusation that Paul had allowed Trophimus, an Ephesian Gentile, to accompany him into the sacred precincts of the temple was of course false. Observing Jerusalem Jews must have known it to be unfounded. Its use as propaganda, however, was extraordinarily successful. Almost instantly the entire city was in uproar and Paul found himself in the hands of a mob. Brutal men seized him and dragged him out of the temple. Gravely and solemnly the ponderous temple doors closed behind him. He was religiously and racially an outcast. Only the timely arrival and intervention of the captain of the Roman guard [1] saved him from instant death.[2] Though saved, Paul was not freed. In a moment he discovered that chains had been put about his wrists which he might never again be able to shake from him. He was a prisoner. In time the tumult ceased and the shouting died; in time also Paul was accorded a hearing and even found favor and friends. But the chains clung fast to the iron bands which held him a bondman by the law of Rome.

I. IMPRISONMENT IN JERUSALEM AND CÆSAREA

From the steps of the castle, after securing the permission of Lysias,[3] Paul was allowed to address the people. As a Christian he had always been a man of courage who preferred death to

[1] The Roman cohort, stationed in the adjoining castle of Antonia, kept itself in constant readiness for such emergencies as this.

[2] The stone which was placed at the entrance to the temple court of women, and which warned all foreigners against trespassing beyond the outer court of the Gentiles, has been discovered, and is now in safekeeping in the museum in Constantinople. The inscription as it appears in Robinson's "Life of Paul," p. 191, is as follows: "No foreigner may enter within the railing or boundary line of the sanctuary. Whoever is caught is himself responsible for the consequences, which are death."

[3] See Acts XXIV:26.

compromise. With respect to things Jewish, however, he had always been of a conciliatory tone. He had consistently subordinated the incidental to the essential. So upon this occasion when he undertook to tell the story of his conversion to the hostile crowd. But his hearers, too, it appears, exercised discrimination. They listened attentively until they heard the word "Gentiles." [1] Then the tumult began anew. Once in the castle, he fared better. His Roman citizenship not only protected him against ignominious treatment but won him the respect of Lysias.

On the next day Paul was given a hearing before the Jewish Sanhedrin. Its presiding officer at the time was the high priest Ananias. As a Roman citizen Paul could not be tried in this Hebrew court on a charge involving a criminal offense. The purpose of the meeting was solely to give Lysias an opportunity to determine for himself the question of the apostle's innocence or guilt. Paul was, for this reason, not disposed to submit to the unjust and humiliating abuse which Ananias ordered to be administered. His reply to Ananias, probably spoken in irony, indicated that the high priest was by his own act disgracing, beyond a possible recognition, the dignity of his office.[2] Respect for authority is rarely enhanced by a resort to physical violence. Josephus tells us that Ananias, only a few years later, himself met a violent death, and that his assassins were Jews.

If Paul had at one time been a member of the Sanhedrin,[3] he well knew the general weaknesses of its members. He had not forgotten that they liked nothing so much as an opportunity for argument. Honest truth-seeking was among them easily subordinated to mere disputatiousness. The Pharisees and Sadducees, in particular, were constantly at strife. Their doctrinal differences were many, but they centered chiefly upon the subject of the resurrection. Their quarrel among themselves proved to Lysias how essentially unfit the members of the Sanhedrin were to pass judgment upon Paul. Lysias perceived that Paul was

[1] See Acts XXII:21–22.
[2] Acts XXIII:1–5.
[3] See Acts XXVI:10.

merely being used as an argumentative weapon with which two openly hostile parties were seeking to destroy one another. The case of the Pharisees was typical: even while defending Paul against the Sadducees by declaring him innocent of evil, they were helping to give Lysias cause for fearing that they might tear him to pieces.[1]

The rule of the mob had failed; so also had the divided council of the Sanhedrin. The last recourse of Paul's enemies lay in a plot to assassinate him. Shame and anger made the assassins desperate. They bound themselves under a curse neither to eat nor to drink until they had accomplished their evil deed. The plan was that Paul was to be fallen upon and slain while he was being conducted from the castle to the Sanhedrin in answer to a pretended demand for a further hearing. The report of the plot reached Lysias through Paul's nephew who lived in Jerusalem. Hurried preparations were made for Paul's safekeeping. At the direction of two centurions, and under cover of darkness, a bodyguard of seventy cavalrymen, assisted by a large infantry detachment, was ordered to escort him from Jerusalem to Cæsarea where resided Antonius Felix, the procurator of Judea. A letter was dispatched by Lysias to Felix. It contained both an explanation of the circumstances of Paul's arrest and a verdict of his innocence. Felix, it seems, might have released Paul at Lysias' recommendation. However, out of a desire to curry favor with the Jews, he kept the apostle a prisoner, remanding him to the custody of the keeper of the Prætorium.[2]

Felix had received his appointment to office, in 52 A. D., at the hand of Claudius in whose royal household he had at one time been a slave. Exaltation to a position of honor did not change his nature. Magnanimity, it may easily be understood, was a quality foreign to him. He ruled, as he had once served, in the spirit of the slave. Though a man of unscrupulous character, his advance to power enabled him to marry into royal families:

[1] Read Acts XXIII:9–10.

[2] The Prætorium had once been the palace of Herod. It was now the governor's judgment hall. Herod the Great had himself built Cæsarea as the Roman port of Jerusalem. In the course of time it became the official residence of the Roman procurators.

his first wife was a daughter of Mark Antony and Cleopatra; Drusilla, a Jewess, whom he married after securing a divorce for her from her former husband, was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

The words of Tertullus, the Sanhedrin lawyer, were pure flattery. The Jews of Palestine hated Felix quite as much as they hated Paul, and with better reason. Moreover, the accusation brought against Paul was false.[1] Even a superficial investigation might have proved that he had not profaned the temple. Seen through the eyes of Luke, the historian, Tertullus becomes his own biographer. He represents Jewish prejudice and passion in its worst aspects. Paul's address before Felix, on the other hand, was a noble example of Christian courage and self-constraint. It convinced the procurator of Paul's innocence. Thereafter he was a prisoner in name only. He was permitted to move about almost as he wished, and to receive guests. Felix personally interested himself in Paul. He seems frequently to have invited him to a private interview. Once, at least, during this period of two years, the impassioned words of Paul pierced his pagan conscience. But the thought of a future day of judgment was unpleasant to Felix, and he considered a life of righteousness temporarily inconvenient.

When Festus became procurator of Judea, the situation, as it involved Paul, came to an unexpected crisis. Festus appears, from all indications, to have been an able and honorable governor. He was, however, unacquainted with Jewish life and laws. The party opposing Paul acted upon a knowledge of this fact to its own advantage. It demanded that Paul be brought back to Jerusalem for the conclusion of his trial. Festus, eager to conciliate the Jews, was at the point of disregarding the imperial law which offered special protection to Roman citizens. At this crucial moment only one course of action lay open to Paul. He took this course by an appeal to Cæsar.[2] The decision, it is certain, was not made without careful forethought. It could be neither re-

[1] Acts XXIV:6.

[2] An appeal to the imperial court at Rome was the privilege of every Roman citizen dissatisfied with a verdict rendered by any local or provincial court.

jected nor recalled. But Paul was satisfied. He had thereby declared himself a Roman. The Sanhedrin had automatically lost its power over him. The mob of assassins, still lying in wait for his return to Jerusalem, now remained forever under the condemnation of its own curse. Festus, too, was satisfied and relieved. Paul's life had been saved without additional open offense to his enemies. What Paul's thoughts were at the prospect of being brought to trial in the court of the emperor, we do not know. If by any chance he knew of the evil reputation Nero was even then winning for himself in Rome, his mind must have entertained certain grave misgivings. Nevertheless they were of little moment compared with the realization of his long cherished hope of an opportunity to preach the gospel of Jesus in the imperial city. Paul had by now attained the state of spiritual sublimity of a truly Christlike apostle. With physical strength unabated, with vision clarified, with unrelenting moral purpose, but with a heart mellowed and made tender with the increasing years, he awaited the call of God to further Christian adventure in a new and hitherto untrodden field. The Christian ambassador in chains was preparing to bring a new liberty and a new life to the Roman empire.

The address of Paul before king Agrippa marks a climax in Luke's biographical narrative. It is fitly called the apostle's Christian apology. The occasion of the discourse was a diplomatic visit which Agrippa had made to Festus' court.[1] Festus, desiring Agrippa's advice in the preparation of his report to the emperor, had summoned Paul to appear before the king and Bernice, his sister, for a consultation and a hearing. Royalty was represented in its full glory and pomp. Outwardly the royal purple and jewelry, and the prisoner's garb and chains, presented one type of contrast; inwardly, however, they presented another. As in the instance of Jesus before Pilate, so here Paul was the central figure. Crowns and thrones offered only an appropriate setting for the scene. Paul was not now on trial for his life. No agitated Jewish crowd waited outside the judgment hall thirst-

[1] The visiting king here referred to is Herod Agrippa II, son of Herod Agrippa I. The seat of his government was Cæsarea Philippi in Northern Palestine.

ing for his blood. The summons of Festus was, in reality, an invitation to Paul to offer testimony to his faith in Jesus Christ. His discourse centered upon three great truths: (1) the Messiahship of Jesus; (2) the resurrection; (3) his conversion and evangelistic call. It closed with an impassioned plea for the acceptance of his gospel message. Its effect was in keeping with the circumstances. Festus, the straightforward Roman, was impressed with Paul's sincerity and moved to consternation by the apostle's learning; Agrippa, the apostate Jew, was at first conscience-stricken, then moved to irony and jest. Nevertheless they were agreed in the opinion that Paul was guilty of no crime, and that, were it not for his appeal to Cæsar, he might forthwith be set free.

II. THE JOURNEY TO ROMAN IMPRISONMENT

Within a short time after Paul's appearance in the presence of Agrippa, he found himself embarked on the voyage to Rome. He had been placed in the custody of Julius, a generous-hearted Roman centurion. Accompanying him, as fellow-travelers, were Aristarchus of Thessalonica, and Luke, the writer of the Acts. Luke's account of this memorable voyage is the most interesting and exact of its kind among the recorded annals of ancient navigation.[1] It presents the reader with a vivid picture both of the methods of sailing and of the personal heroism of the men who, in those early days, in small undeveloped crafts, braved the countless unknown and deadly perils of the sea. Navigation on the Mediterranean was, at this time, of a two-fold order: (1) coastwise travel along the shores of Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy; (2) trans-Mediterranean sailing from such important harbors as Alexandria and Antioch directly to Rome.

Paul and his company began their journey on one of the smaller coastwise vessels. Its first port was Sidon, where Paul was allowed to go ashore and visit with Christian friends while the ship unloaded and reloaded its cargo. The second stopping place was Myra, a port in southern Lycia, well beyond the

[1] The story, as recorded in Acts XXVII, is based directly upon Luke's diary.

island of Cyprus. Here a transfer was made by Julius to a larger grain-carrying transport bound from Alexandria for Italy. In addition to its freight this ship had a passenger roll of two hundred and seventy-six travelers and sailors. The plan of the captain was to steer a westward course among the islands of the Ægean; but contrary winds forbade. Accordingly, he sailed southward along the island of Crete and anchored in the shelter of one of its southern harbors called Fair Havens. Here business necessitated a rather extended delay. It had probably been as late as September when Paul and his associates left Cæsarea. By this time it was late in autumn, perhaps about the middle of October. The season for safe sailing had, therefore, very nearly closed. The captain of the ship, after consultation with his officers, decided, nevertheless, to proceed on the journey. Paul, who had already come to be known as an experienced maritime traveler, was called into council. He advised wintering in Fair Havens. The captain, however, gave ear to the majority. Fair Havens was an unattractive harbor, and, just then, a soft south wind was blowing. Heedless of Paul's warning, the sailors pulled anchor, and the ship was off to sea. The agreement was that effort should be made to reach Phœnix, forty miles to the west, where the crew could find more commodious winter quarters. Almost immediately, however, the course of the mariners was changed. The Euraquilo, a terrific northeastern gale, came sweeping down upon the ship, setting it helplessly adrift and driving it southward across the Mediterranean.

For two weeks the crew on board saw neither sun nor stars. The ship, though undergirded with cables, labored heavily. With the mainsail lowered, and most of its cargo and tackle thrown overboard, it yielded to the unabated fury of the storm. When, at last, land was in sight, it proved to be the little island of Malta, lying about sixty miles south of Sicily. In attempting a landing at an unfamiliar place and from a heavily running sea, the ship was run aground and dashed to pieces. The fact that no lives were lost was mainly attributable to the sound judgment, the presence of mind, and the capable leadership of Paul. As in many a previous crisis in his life, he proved himself the

master in a perilous situation. The acknowledged source of his power, his courage, and his radiant cheer was his abiding confidence in God. Above the noise of the storm Paul had heard the reassuring voice of Jesus, and the peace of the deep sea, which underlies its troubled surface, had settled into his soul.

The three remaining winter months were passed by Paul and his strange company on the isle of Malta. Then, with the opening of the season of navigation [1] they set out for Rome. The first landing place at which the ship went to port was Syracuse.[2] Thence the travelers sailed to Rhegium, the gateway to the Bay of Naples. After another day aboard the ship, moving with sails open to the balmy wind of an Italian spring, they came to land at Puteoli. Puteoli was a magnificent little city resting in the bosom of the Bay of Naples. It was the favorite country resort of a large number of the Roman nobility. Paul was allowed to spend a week with the community of Christians in Puteoli, after which, in the friendly custody of Julius, and accompanied by Aristarchus and Luke, he undertook the inland journey of the remaining one hundred and fifty miles to the city of Rome. A delegation of Christians, having heard in advance of Paul's arrival in Italy, came out of the capital to meet him, some of them going down the Appian Way as far as the Three Taverns, others even farther to the famous Market of Appius.[3] Luke writes that when Paul noted the welcome with which he was being received, he thanked God and took courage.

This statement, together with the brief concluding paragraphs of the book of the Acts, may be regarded as interpretative of the future which awaited Paul in the imperial capital. We may appropriately infer from these closing words (1) that his apostleship at once commended itself to the Christian disciples in Rome, (2) that he was himself not disheartened by the circumstances of his legal bondage, (3) that his imprisonment was, in fact, technical rather than actual, (4) that there was

[1] The time is the spring of 59 A. D.

[2] The vessel on which they now found themselves had come across the Mediterranean from Alexandria.

[3] Three Taverns was thirty miles out of Rome; the distance to the Market of Appius was forty miles.

no severe Jewish opposition to his work among the Christians of the city, (5) that he preached Christ with no further fear of molestation, with all the evangelistic fervor of his former days, and presumably with marked success. Beyond these inferences the biographer of Paul leads his readers into a broad expanse of silence. The closing years of Paul's life, like those of his youth, are, for the most part, hidden from our view. We are, however, not left altogether in darkness concerning the apostle's ministry during these significant years. He has himself given us the evidence of their spiritual labors in the form of four literary monuments, whose religious and historical value is outranked by few New Testament writings. These writings are the letters of Paul to the Philippians, the Colossians, the Ephesians, and to Philemon. They are known as Paul's prison epistles. Their study will now engage our attention.

III. THE PRISON LETTERS

As a group these writings reveal three distinctive characteristics. The first of these may be classed as personal. Paul is referred to in the letters as having by now become an aged man. His greatest missionary work is done. Life in chains has wrought the inevitable change.[1] Though scarcely two years have passed since Paul's arrival at Rome, he seems to be a different man. The old evangelistic fervor is still present; but it no longer expresses itself in vigorous action or in fiery controversy. Instead it finds outlet in deep religious emotion, in tender human affection, in fatherly solicitude, in tranquil reflection, in a tested and resigned faith, and in the joy of a pure and radiant immortal hope. Compared with his previous correspondence, these prison letters breathe a changed atmosphere. The spiritual horizon for Paul is not without lingering clouds, but the great period of storm is over. The afternoon of life for him is slowly settling into evening peace and calm. Personal anxieties have receded into

[1] Some scholars still hold that these letters were written by Paul from Cæsarea during the apostle's imprisonment there. Modern consensus of opinion, however, favors the tradition that they were written from Rome.

the background. Past conflicts are gradually being transformed into distant and hallowed memories. The future, with its reward of eternal fellowship with Christ, holds out a beckoning hand to the faithful Christian apostle.

The second distinguishable trait of the prison letters is doctrinal. The apostle in prison has become more speculative in his approach to theological questions. The great truths of Christianity are no longer viewed by him primarily in their experimental aspects, as men, for example, test scientific principles in laboratories. The stage of that purely inductive process now lies behind him. The Christian gospel has been fully tested and tried. Its efficacy and finality have ceased to involve questions of doubt. For the present, Paul believes, the supreme need is neither for experimentalists to test the truth that is in Christ, nor for apologists to defend it, but for devoted Christian disciples who have the spiritual genius to comprehend its meaning and the grace and courage to apply it to their own daily lives. Paul's emphasis shifts noticeably, in the prison correspondence, from a reinterpretation of gospel history to a more subjectively spiritual contemplation of the person of Christ. Taking for granted the unalterable significance of what Jesus once did and said, he proceeds to an exposition of the place of Christ in the world's history for all time.

Lastly the prison letters reflect a change of religious circumstances among the people to whom they are addressed. The old and bitter conflict with the Judaizers is practically at an end. Life within the communities, both in Asia and in Macedonia, has progressed from crudely pagan to more ethically Christian standards. A new and younger leadership has arisen, more liberal and teachable, but requiring apostolic guidance and instruction. Most significant of all, dangerous heresies are cropping out among the churches because of their contact with various pagan philosophies and cults of the ancient world. To preserve the early purity of the Christian faith, to interpret Jesus anew to the rising generation of disciples, to strengthen the character of the morally infirm and irresolute, to insure the further continuance of strong religious leadership, to comfort, to teach, to exhort,

and, by means of these ministrations, to bear witness again and again to the unsearchable riches of human redemption in Christ, —these purposes and aims, taken together, constitute the background of the four prison epistles.

1. The letter to Philemon stands unique among Paul's writings. It is the only surviving purely private letter of the apostle. Its atmosphere is Christian, Roman, and domestic. Friendship and brotherhood are its main interests. Earnest courageousness and gentlemanly courtesy combine to make it a genuine and rare masterpiece.

Philemon lived in Colossæ, a city in the province of Asia. Onesimus was a runaway slave. He had come to Rome where, under the influence of Paul, he had become a Christian. Then duty and honor demanded that he surrender himself to his master. Paul did not at any time permit the Christian liberty he preached to be interpreted as a license to lawlessness. Evil institutions, like human slavery, were, he believed, not successfully overthrown merely by conscienceless rebellion. The candid and unselfish spirit of Christian brotherhood alone could overcome them by a removal of the conditions which made them inevitable. An anti-slavery tract from the pen of Paul would only have aroused Roman resentment. Imperial hostility against the church might easily have threatened its annihilation. The time for open revolt had not yet come. Nor did it come for many centuries thereafter. Paul was content to plant the revolutionary seed in previously well prepared soil. He knew that Philemon would not be able to receive Onesimus as a beloved Christian brother while still regarding him as a mere chattel. Philemon may have wondered and hesitated at Paul's radical teaching. He must have felt its "grip of steel in a glove of velvet." What, however, could he do? Paul himself offered to pay the debt incurred by Onesimus' desertion. Only, as a Christian, Philemon was asked to remember how greatly he himself was indebted to Paul. We may safely infer that the apostle's request was willingly granted.[1]

[1] The date of the letter, together with those of the three other prison letters, is somewhere between 59 and 61 A. D.

2. Accompanying the letter which Paul wrote to Philemon, he sent another addressed to the Christians at Colossæ. It was carried by Tychicus and given to Philemon to be read to the church which regularly convened in his house. Epaphras, a native Colossian, one of Paul's own converts and a temporary visitor in Rome, was probably the carrier of the report that gave occasion to the letter. A strange heresy had arisen in the Asian province, and was subtly undermining the religious faith of the Colossian Christians. The heresy seems, from present appearances, to have been the result of an intermixture of one or more of the popular mystery cults, of gnostic philosophy, and of Judaism. Those who propagated it were attempting, to the best of their understanding, to grapple with the age-old problem of the character of God and His relationship to the world. Bound up with it were the further questions involving the existence of a universe of matter and of moral evil.[1] By associating evil with the material world, the philosophy, later known as Gnosticism, developed the idea of a supra-mundane God Whose far-off existence required the intermediary services of angels in order to establish vital communication with terrestrial creatures, including man. Various orders or ranks were believed to exist among these intermediating agents, of which the highest belonged to Jesus. Opinion concerning him was very generally divided into two classes. It was believed either (1) that, as a divinely spiritual being, Jesus could in reality have had no material or mortal body, in which case the appearance of his physical body was a mere illusion, or (2) that the angelic Christ, through the miracle of the incarnation,[2] joined himself to the historical man, Jesus, and departed again from him before the moment of his death on the cross.

[1] Eastern religions had for centuries tried to find a solution to these problems. Zoroastrianism adopted a dualistic world philosophy according to which good and evil (matter and spirit) were eternally coexistent. Philosophical Brahmanism denied the reality, first of evil, then of matter, declaring both to be illusions of a fettered mind. Judaism accepted the view of a transcendent God Who lived above and apart from evil.

[2] This miracle of the divine correlationship was also thought of as having possibly occurred at the time of Jesus' baptism.

There was something in this gnostic and mystical heresy that made a forceful appeal to the Christians of Pagan Asia Minor. Paul recognizing this fact, prepared to meet it in its own field. Using its own philosophical weapons, he took a position that reached far beyond the spiritual conception of the perverters of his Christian gospel, and laid there a new basis for his claim of the absolute supremacy of Christ.[1] The message of Colossians may be summed up in the apostle's ringing phrase: "Christ is all, and in all." [2] He is (1) the full and sufficient mediator between God and man; (2) man's spiritual and moral saviour; (3) the world's abundant life and future hope. The Christian life is defined by Paul in this letter as a life hidden with Christ in God.[3]

3. The letter to the Ephesians bears a marked resemblance to Colossians. The two writings have a common historical and religious background. They are the work of the same author.[4] There is in them the same noble passion to exalt and glorify Christ. They differ, however, in their characteristic points of emphasis. Whereas in Colossians Paul stresses the paramountcy of Christ as the divine mediator between God and the world, his mind, in Ephesians, is upon the relationship of Christ to the church. The epistles, it is noticeable, represent two distinct yet parallel trains of thought. Just as, according to Colossians, the fulness of the Godhead dwells incarnate in Christ, so, according to Ephesians, the fulness of Christ is manifestly present in the church. While the philosophical note is strong in Colossians, the

[1] Paul seems, in writing Colossians to have been influenced by his acquaintance with certain current Jewish apocalyptic books. To quote from Professor Kent (Hist. Bible, Vol. VI, p. 233): "Instead of the historical Jesus, we have here Christ interpreted in the language of the Jewish apocalypses. Like all the Jews of his age, Paul firmly believed in hierarchies of angelic beings, both good and bad. Through the Jewish belief in personified wisdom, his mind had been opened to the doctrine of the Logos, as set forth by the Greek philosophers and Philo. He also appreciated the attractions of the mystery religions which offered personal salvation through mystical unity with the deity."

[2] Col. III:11.

[3] Col. III:3.

[4] The question of the Pauline authorship of Ephesians is now all but settled. It is less difficult to assume that Paul—having in mind the general danger of the spread of the heresy dealt with in Colossians—himself wrote Ephesians than to explain how it could be so successfully duplicated by another later writer.

tone of Ephesians is simple and practical. Paul's vision of the church centers, in this latter epistle, upon the ideals of Christian unity and universality. He interprets his concept by means of a three-fold symbolism. The church is (1) the body of which Christ is the head, (2) the holy temple of God of which Jesus is the chief corner stone, and (3) the spotless and beloved bride of Christ.[1]

The letter was probably not written directly or exclusively to the Christians at Ephesus. There is an atmosphere of formality about it which the reader finds difficult to reconcile with the fact of Paul's intimate acquaintance with a church to which he gave three of the very best years of his missionary life. The apostle's reference [2] to a letter, written by him to the Christian disciples at Laodicea, has led to the rather general opinion that Ephesians is either a duplicate copy of an encyclical or circulating letter directed to be read to the Asian churches, or the original epistle addressed to the Laodicean church.[3]

4. The letter to the Philippians may appropriately be regarded as the latest of the prison group. In it Paul becomes once more intimately autobiographical, giving us a glimpse into his own personal and spiritual life. He appears, from the circumstances of the letter, to have been in financial need. The Philippian Christians, ever mindful of his possible distress, have sent Epaphroditus to bring him aid. Epaphroditus has himself been seriously ill, but is now again restored to health. Paul seems somewhat lonely. Of the once large but now broken circle of intimate friends, Timothy only is just then in the city. The hearing before the Roman tribunal, long anticipated, has finally taken place, but it has not resulted in the apostle's release. What the outcome of the trial will be he does not know. It may mean martyrdom. If so, Paul is prepared. His life is in God's hand.[4] His wish, as

[1] See Eph. IV:15–16, II:20–22, and V:25–28.

[2] The words "at Ephesus" are omitted in two oldest MSS., Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus. Origen's text of the epistle evidently did not contain the two title words. Marcion, a second century writer, gives our present letter to the Ephesians the name of the letter to the Laodiceans.

[3] Col. IV:16.

[4] Read especially I:21 f., II:17, and IV:4.

ever before, is only to magnify Jesus Christ and trustingly to fulfil his ministry. The thought of his Philippian friends turns every possible sorrow into joy. He is prepared to die, and thus be with Christ; but life calls to him from the crowded city thoroughfares, from the free open country, and from the hearts of loyal Christian comrades. He hopes before long to be at liberty and thereafter once again to visit his beloved Macedonian churches. Was Paul's wish granted? Upon the answer to this question hinges the problem of the Pauline authorship of the New Testament writings known as the Pastoral Epistles.

IV. THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

Did Paul live to realize his long cherished desire to visit Spain? [1] We do not know. The proof of Scriptural data is neither positively for nor against either assumption. If he did not, we must look to other sources of authorship for the present text of First and Second Timothy and Titus. The difficulties in the way of attributing these letters to Paul are not to be overlooked. Briefly listed, they are: (1) the clear lack of similarity between the pastorals and the book of the Acts; (2) the formality with which the writer addresses Timothy and Titus who were Paul's intimate friends; (3) the strong emphasis laid upon church organization; (4) the recognition which their author gives to salvation through "works"; (5) a reference to heresies which came into actual prominence only after Paul's day; (6) the differences in style and vocabulary between these epistles and the undisputed letters of Paul.[2]

Tradition, nevertheless, uniformly subscribes to Paul's authorship of the pastorals, and points toward at least the probability of his release from the first Roman imprisonment for a visit to his churches in Macedonia, and for a journey westward into Spain.[3] Such an additional period of missionary activity is,

[1] See Romans XV:24.

[2] The arguments here presented are substantially those mentioned by G. W. Wade in his N. T. Hist. p. 296.

[3] Clement of Rome, e. g., late in the first century, in a letter to the Corinthians, wrote of Paul as having "gone to the extreme limit (i. e., the farthest bounds) of

moreover, implied, if not definitely noted, in Second Timothy IV:16–18. Whatever the circumstances of their final literary composition, the pastoral epistles are Pauline at least in historical nucleus and in evangelistic spirit. If, despite acknowledged difficulties, we may go a step farther and accept them as genuinely and entirely the work of Paul, we can, with the historical material which they offer, undertake to reconstruct in outline the fragmentary events for a closing chapter of his life. Following the order of their arrangement, as prepared by a present day Biblical scholar,[1] these events are briefly as follows: "Paul is acquitted at Rome perhaps on condition that he remain an exile from Judea. He embarks for Spain. He spends some time planting the gospel along the coast. He then returns to visit his earlier churches. He pays the promised visit to Philemon. He leaves Timothy in charge at Ephesus; visits Macedonia; writes First Timothy; leaves Macedonia to preach in Crete, stopping at Troas and Miletus on the way. He plants the gospel in Crete. Leaving Titus in charge there he revisits Corinth, where he writes a letter to Titus. From Corinth he makes a tour overland northward to Nicopolis, where his enemies finally secure his arrest. He is taken to Rome, where he writes Second Timothy shortly before his death."

The testimony of tradition is that Paul suffered martyrdom in Rome under the reign of Nero.[2] Of his last days in the Roman dungeon, awaiting the call of the executioner, the apostle himself gives us a notably vivid picture in the closing chapter of the second letter to Timothy. The entire epistle is very intimately

the West." Clement could by this destination hardly have meant Rome where he himself lived. The Muratorian Canon, a second century document composed of N. T. books, positively accepts Paul's journey to Spain as a historical fact.

[1] B. W. Robinson, "The Life of Paul," p. 215.

[2] The unanimity of this testimony is convincing. Irenæus, who depends for his information upon Polycarp, infers it in linking the name of Paul with that of Peter. Clement of Rome refers to Paul's martyrdom as the "greatest example of endurance." Ignatius of Antioch, writing to Ephesus, says that Paul was a martyr. Tertullian of Carthage and Origen of Alexandria declare that Paul suffered in Rome and was beheaded. Eusebius of Cæsarea, a historian of the fourth century, quotes from II Timothy and mentions both Paul's release from his first captivity and his martyrdom under Nero.

personal. Toward its end it moves steadily and irresistibly nearer to the moment of the writer's death. Paul is now alone. His freedom is under severe restraint. His old friends are gone. Some of them, of whom Demas is an example, have forsaken him for the love of the present world. Luke only remains. Paul anxiously awaits the arrival and companionship of Timothy and of Mark. Why so anxiously? Did they reach Rome in time to fulfil his wish? We do not know. It appears clearly that Paul is not only lonely and under heavy guard; he is in want. The prison cell is damp and cold. He needs the cloak left by him in Troas on his last journey through the coast land of Asia; and the books he left there. Enemies, moreover, surround him in Rome on every hand. The opposition now, however, is not Jewish but pagan. There has apparently been another trial, and Paul's escape has been as miraculous as a man's rescue from the paw and teeth of a lion.[1] The brutal power which is playing with his life may leap upon him and deal its fatal blow at any moment. But the apostle does not falter. He has not only the courage to meet death; he is resigned to it; he is prepared for it; he welcomes its release; he has earned its reward.[2] Once again, in a few short sentences, he urges Timothy to come to him in all haste. The situation involving him seems threatening. A brief, almost abrupt, salutation closes the letter. Paul's work is done. The curtain of history has dropped upon his career. But through it, by the dim light of tradition, we witness the enactment of a final scene. In it Paul is kneeling with bowed head before the Roman executioner. That is the end. Yet it proves to be, in reality, only the beginning of the great apostle's place in history. Henceforth with Jesus, whom, by the consecration of his great talent, he has exalted beyond the power of any other living disciple, he belongs to the ages.

[1] II Tim. IV:17. Is the reference here directly to Nero? Probably.
[2] II Tim. IV:6–7.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE LATE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

THE death of Paul marked a turning point in apostolic history. All that had gone before had had to do with beginnings; the period which followed witnessed the actual and definite establishment of the Christian church. Paul's evangelistic career and his theological genius had made Christianity a universal religion. The Roman empire now helped to make it a recognized historical movement to be reckoned with in the political and social life of the future western world. Its transition from a Jewish sect to an independent religious faith was thus fully realized.

It was natural that the Christian Gospel, in its newly emancipated and adopted form, should experience a notable increase in popularity. By its vital and consolidating spirit of brotherhood, its moral idealism, and its simple satisfying faith it was commending itself, more than any other religion, to the noblest men and women of the age. Under apostolic training the church was developing a strong leadership. Its genius for organization was openly asserting itself. Its powers of adaptation were extraordinary. Moreover, Christianity was beginning to attract the attention of scholars. Paul had, through his teachings, given it a philosophy. Its doctrines made a speculative appeal to the Greek mind. It gained further recognition by the fact that it was truth-seeking, and because its truths yielded readily to systematization. Again it satisfied those whose emotional interest in religion had led them from philosophy to the various mystery cults then current within the territory of the empire.

By far the most influential factor, however, in the establishment of Christianity was the personal life of the early Chris-

tians. The simple piety, the moral purity, the exemplary home life, and the peaceable law-abiding habits of the disciples of Jesus won them general respect and admiration. Superstitious persons held them in reverential awe. Not infrequently they were regarded as being in league with imagined celestial spirits, some of them menacing and evil. Their very goodness thus endangered life for them by arousing pagan fear or jealousy and hatred. The result was that from the very first many Christians became martyrs. But the death of such heroes of the faith only served to strengthen those that remained. Suffering for the sake of their faith was accounted to be as much a privilege as a duty; for it was not forgotten that the church owed its very existence to the sacrificial death of its Founder. The triumph of Christianity in the Roman empire was therefore inevitable. The symbol of the cross became the sign by which the disciples of Jesus were entering upon their mission of conquering the world.

The biblical sources available for the reconstruction of the period of late apostolic history are few. The book of the Acts, it has been noted, closes with Paul's arrival in Rome.[1] Certain late New Testament letters or epistles, belonging to this period,[2] reflect the religious life of the time, but furnish no chronological record of its events. Fortunately ecclesiastical and secular Roman history here offers valuable guidance to our study. The writings of the apostolic fathers, too, present treasured contributions to an understanding of the period.[3]

I. PERSECUTIONS

The life of the church during this period is retraceable upon

[1] I. e., with about 60 A. D.

[2] I. e., the period between 65 and 100 A. D., as represented by the writings mentioned in this chapter.

[3] For information concrning the persecutions of the Christians under Nero (c. 64 A. D.), under Domitian (c. 90 A. D.), and under Trajan (c. 110 A. D.), see Tacitus "Ann." XV:44, Suetonius "Nero" XVI, Eusebius "Hist. Eccl." III:18, Pliny Jr. "Epp." X:96–97, and Aristides "Apol." 2, 13, 15, 16. Regarding the destruction of Jerusalem consult Josephus "Wars" Book V and VI, and Eusebius "Eccl. Hist." III:5–6. Among the apostolic fathers and early church theologians read especially from the following: Papias, Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Cyprian, Origen, Tertullian, and Irenæus.

the background of two crucial historical events. The first of these was the disastrous burning of Rome in 64 A. D. Nero, generally believed to have been himself guilty of the conflagration, placed the blame for it upon the Christians. The number of Christian disciples in the imperial city had, during the past two decades, steadily increased. Many of them were Gentiles and therefore not under the protection of the royal edict which granted special religious privileges to the Roman Jews. Popular prejudice against them was strong. They were forced to endure both Jewish hatred and pagan misunderstanding. Their private gatherings were interpreted as evidences of a developing conspiracy; their free association as men and women exposed them to the accusation of being immoral; their sacraments, especially the Eucharist or Lord's Supper, were superstitiously believed to be barbarous blood sacrifices involving the taking of human life and even cannibalism. In short, the report was spread that the followers of Jesus were a secretive and therefore dangerous and degenerate sect of which Rome would do well to rid itself at the earliest opportune moment. No argument was required to fasten the guilt for Nero's infamous deed upon them. The persecution which followed was of only short duration, but while it lasted it was terrible. Nero's more than half idiotic conceit, and his thirst for cruelty led him to make his treatment of the Christians not only atrocious but spectacular. It became a veritable carnival of blood that in the end stirred even the general witnessing population to sympathy and revolt.[1] For the Christians themselves the persecution meant martyrdom, which they neither invited nor evaded. Through it—as the etymology of the word makes plain—they became witnesses for Christ in an unredeemed and pagan world. As in Jerusalem, shortly after Pentecost, so now in Rome, the blood of the martyrs became the precious seed of the church.

The second crucial event in the later apostolic church was the destruction of Jerusalem. The catastrophe occurred in 70

[1] A vivid and terrifying picture of this persecution is presented by the historian Tacitus in his "Annals," XV:44. See also in this connection McGiffert, "The Apostolic Age," p. 627 f., and Ramsay, "The Church in the Roman Empire," p. 226 f.

A. D. Its somber shadow falls across the entire subsequent age. Its influence upon the majority of the New Testament writings is a factor of utmost importance in their historical study.[1] The Gospel of Matthew was written directly upon the background of this calamity. Luke's Gospel, written a decade later and by a Gentile, presents the new world outlook which was its inevitable consequence.[2]

The Jewish revolt began in 66 A. D. The tyranny of the Roman procurators had driven the people into a state of desperate frenzy.[3] All of Palestine suddenly rose in rebellion. The elders of the land, realizing the futility of the uprising, counselled patience and forbearance. But they were outnumbered by the rapidly growing party of the Zealots who advocated armed resistance. The Zealots were, in the course of the year, joined by the still more fanatical Sicarii, or assassins, whose utter recklessness and insistence upon crime made Roman interference a necessity. By the end of 67 A. D. the army of Vespasian had subdued Galilee. The year from June 68 to July 69 A. D. was spent in securing the recovery of the empire from the revolution which attended the death of Nero. Then Vespasian himself went to Rome to claim the throne, while his son Titus undertook and completed the siege of Jerusalem. The Christians of the city, believing the calamity now befalling the Jews to be a visitation of divine punishment for their rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus, fled from the capital in a body, finding hospitality in the territory of the Decapolis and in the cities of Cæsarea and Tyre. For this desertion they were held in contempt by the Jews who in derision called them the "Nazarenes." After the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, Jewish life in Palestine began to center more and more in the coastal town of Jamnia,[4] where the devout among the rabbis continued

[1] Only the writings of Paul, and probably the Gospel of Mark, antedate 70 A. D.

[2] To trace this influence read, e. g., "Josephus' Wars," Books V and VI, Eusebius' "Hist. Eccl." III:5–6. Then read Mtt. XXIV, and Luke XXI.

[3] The procurator under whom the tyranny reached its height was Gessius Florus, who entered into office in 64 A. D.

[4] The town was situated near Joppa on the Mediterranean.

their study of the sacred law. The Sanhedrin was gone, and with it the power and, in fact, the occupation of the priests. Nothing remained now of the past glory of Jerusalem but its memory, and nothing for the future but a far-off Messianic hope to which every loyal Jewish heart clung with a devoted and almost desperate passion.

As time passed, the Christians of the Jewish mother church found themselves in a progressively sad plight. Abandoned by the Christian Gentiles, despised by Judaism, and without continued apostolic leadership, they came gradually to realize that the door of future progress was closing itself against them. More and more, accordingly, they reverted to their ancestral religion of the Mosaic law. The most narrow and exclusive of them came, before long, to be known by the heretical name Ebionites, a sect of extreme separatists who rejected both the divinity of Jesus and the apostleship and writings of Paul.[1] Thus the first chapter of late apostolic history comes to a close with Palestinian Christianity bordering on the verge of a lapse into Judaism, and with the church in the empire harassed and endangered by a temporary but fearful storm of persecution.

After the death of Nero the Christians in Rome were permitted to live, for a short time, in comparative peace. The reigns of Vespasian and Titus—excepting only occasional local disturbances—represented a period of relative calm. It proved, however, little more than an interval of quiet between storms. The persecution which followed was slightly less severe, but more persistent and widespread. It came suddenly in the reign of Domitian, who is remembered in history as a barbarous and jealous autocrat.[2] Not content with the title of an "imperator," he arrogantly demanded to be known as "dominus et deus." Those who refused him divine homage were convicted, not merely of political treason but of sacrilege. The penalty was either banishment or death. Like Herod, he refused to spare even

[1] The Ebionites discarded all miraculous elements in the life and character of Jesus. They disappeared from history during the fifth century A. D.

[2] The rule of Domitian extended from 81 to 96 A. D. The persecution probably began about 90 A. D.

those of his own household.[1] Emperor-worship theretofore regarded mainly as a test of patriotism, now became a fanatical cult. Domitian's edict made every Christian an outlaw, and Christianity a heresy to be utterly exterminated. Men were required to prove their loyalty to Rome, not by their character, but by means of a spoken confession. For Christians, accordingly, there was no possible escape except through a denial of Christ. The program of persecution was extended to include the remotest colonies. The severity with which punishment was meted out to offenders depended upon the character of the respective provincial governors, and served, in the emperor's judgment, as an index to their political loyalty. A letter written by Pliny, the famous Roman writer, to the Emperor Trajan, though representing a later time and a more lenient policy than that pursued by Domitian, furnishes us with information as to the process and the degree of punishment to which Christians loyal to their faith were generally subjected.[2] Their noble fortitude and strong moral character are openly commended by the not unsympathetic territorial ruler. Thousands of them, both men and women, chose death rather than to deny and revile Christ. Little wonder, on the other hand, that many found the trial too great to endure! It was a time when, if ever, encouragement was needed to inspire the followers of Jesus to hope and loyalty. Such inspiration was forthcoming in three New Testament writings whose messages will at this time receive our brief consideration. They are First Peter, Hebrews, and Revelation.

A study of the epistle called First Peter confronts us with a historical question: Was it the outgrowth of the Neronian persecution of 64 A. D.; or of the affliction which befell the Chris-

[1] Flavius Clement, his own cousin, e. g., was ordered executed. Domitilla, his wife, who was a Christian, was banished from the empire. The name of Domitilla is full of historical significance. It is today found inscribed in one of the Christian catacombs. It is known that her two sons were once adopted by the emperor himself. They, too, were doubtless Christians. Had the circumstances been different, one of them might have become the first Christian emperor of Rome before the end of the first century A. D.

[2] The letter referred to was written by Pliny the Younger C. 112 A. D. He was then governor of Bithynia. For an extract from it see Hill, "The Apostolic Age," p. 304, or Kent, "Histor. Bible," Vol. VI, p. 246.

tians between 90 and 95 A. D., under the reign of Domitian? If Peter, one of the original twelve apostles, was its author, it is, in all probability, to be associated with the earlier of these two religious crises.[1] Accepting conditionally this view, which is upheld by the unanimous opinion of the earliest Christian writers, we find the letter to be one of exceptional historical and religious value. It is composed under the stress and amid the alarm of a great impending danger. A "fiery trial" awaits both the writer and his readers. Babylon, by which name the author cautiously designates the city of Rome,[2] is aroused to hostility against the followers of Jesus, and the persecution is certain to spread eastward into the region of the Dispersion to which the epistle is addressed. Perhaps Peter is writing to those Christians who, under the threat of Nero, have fled from Rome to find refuge in the province of Asia. The spirit of martyrdom pervades the entire letter. Yet it is in every way the product of a sane and practical mind. Peter is in it fulfilling the expectation of his Master; he is proving himself a man of steadfastness and courage, a faithful shepherd of the flock of Christ. His message is throughout one of radiant hope. He exhorts his fellow Christians to patience in the face of every tribulation. For his inspiration he draws upon his own memory of the precious words and holy example of Jesus himself. The epistle is a worthy monument to its author, who was probably the most gifted and the greatest of Jesus' first disciples.

With the epistle to the Hebrews we come into the presence of a unique book. It merits distinction in a number of respects. It is anonymous: We do not definitely know either to whom, or when it was written. It is addressed to Hebrews; yet its Greek style is the best in the New Testament. It is an almost perfect composition that "begins like a treatise, proceeds like an oration, and ends like a letter." [3] Its content is boldly argumentative and theological; its allegorical use of Old Testament scrip-

[1] Among the scholars who favor the time of Nero are: Ewald, Moffatt, Hort, Lightfoot, Adeney, Bacon and Wade. In favor of the time of Domitian are: Ramsay, McGiffert, Scott, and Kent.

[2] Peter is himself in Rome when he writes the epistle.

[3] A quotation from Professor Doremus A. Hayes.

ture reveals the influence of Hellenistic and Alexandrian philosophy. Again the epistle represents neither a Pauline nor a Judaistic religious outlook, but a position intermediately between the writings of Paul and the epistle of James. It stands likewise midway between Paul and the almost complete Alexandrianism of the author of the Fourth Gospel. It is a scholar's and a philosopher's epistle. Except the Gospel of Luke, there is not another New Testament writing that has been so often eulogized.[1]

Yet it is not the formal but the spiritual qualities of the great epistle to which we are most attracted. We are more deeply stirred by the author's heroic faith than by his masterly art and logic. He convinces us that beyond his acquaintance with Moses and Plato,[2] he has the mastery of the supreme knowledge which is in Christ. He is aware, moreover, that his readers face a momentous spiritual crisis. The background of his utterances, like that of First Peter, is one of threatening persecution. Whether the time is that of Nero or Domitian is a question of uncertainty; so also the place from which or to which the author is writing.[3] It is clear, however, that the people whom he addresses are Jewish Christians, who, under the stress of an impending trial of their faith, are tempted to abandon their allegiance to Christ and to return to Judaism. Such an apostasy, the writer pleads, will not only lead to individual and personal disappointment, but will endanger the future hope and life of Christianity. Like Paul in his letter to the Colossians, the author steps into the widening breach. His message is that Christ is supreme; he is a complete revelation of the human side of God; he is mankind's great highpriest representing the divine nature that is in man. By faith men of ancient times lived as heroes and died as martyrs. As an overshadowing cloud of spiritual witnesses they now expectantly await a similar victory on the part of those

[1] Schaff, e. g., speaks of it as "obscure in origin, but clear and deep in its knowledge of Christ." Luther honored it with these words: "Das ist eine starke, mächtige und hohe Epistel."

[2] Not directly with Plato, perhaps, but indirectly through Philo the noted Alexandrian Jew.

[3] Of all the destinations mentioned in connection with the epistle the most probable is Rome.

to whom Jesus Christ has revealed himself as the divine author and perfecter of their faith.[1]

The book of the Revelation is the only completely prophetic writing in the New Testament. There is about it a uniqueness that has been the cause of much speculation. The basis of this speculative tendency lies in both the writer's literary style and in his theme. Like the Old Testament book of Daniel, Revelation is an apocalypse. Its author's purpose is to reveal what lies in the hidden future,—a task invariably fraught with difficulties and uncertainties, but irresistibly adventurous and often richly rewarding. The field of such work lies peculiarly within the realm of the inspired and prophetic imagination. Its ideas are expressed by means of pictures. It abounds in expressions of literary symbolism which, when taken out of their natural historical setting, not infrequently convey a vague or mistaken meaning. Correctly interpreted, on the other hand, no form or type of writing is so rich in moral and spiritual significance.

The book of Revelation is a great supernatural drama. Christ is its central figure. The argument centers upon the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth. Its early scenes are enacted in the midst of a tragic setting. The spirit is, throughout, one of conflict. The loyal sons of faith are summoned to battle against evil. Heaven itself comes to the rescue of earth in the great impending struggle at Armageddon.[2] Exclusive of its prologue and epilogue the book falls into two major parts. The first presents a picture of the church of the present; the second envisages the church of the future.[3] The messages to the seven churches of the province of Asia offer us glimpses into the life of the late apostolic church. The visions deal with the overthrow of the empire of Rome and of the earthly rule of Satan. Chapters XIII and XVII are especially suggestive of the back-ground out of which the Apocalypse arose. The reference in both of them is unmistakably to Rome. In the one the empire

[1] See especially Heb. XI on the heroes of faith.

[2] The term has come to symbolize any great battle fought out between the powers of good and evil. See Judges V, especially v. 19. Cf. Rev. XVI:16.

[3] By chapters the divisions are: (1) Chapters I–III; (2) Chapters IV–XXII.

is pictured as a beast demanding to be worshiped, yet living only to dominate and to devour; in the other it is represented as an evil woman whose seven heads are seven Roman kings.[1]

Though individual portions of the Apocalypse point to an earlier period, probably that of Vespasian, the book in its present complete form is quite certainly the product of the time of Domitian. The established and rigorously enforced emperor-cult, the historical instances of noble Christian martyrdom, the relentless efforts directed toward the actual extermination of Christianity, and the impassioned but disguised prophecies against Rome, taken together, all point toward this conclusion. Whether the book was written by John the apostle, John the Presbyter, or another and perhaps later author called by that familiar name, we do not know. The keynote of the book is victory. The drama, begun in an undertone of sorrow, ends with a pæan of praise. Death is swallowed up in life; tears are turned to joy; Christ is come to earth. The Revelation is indeed a marvelous book. No inspired saint ever dared a bolder prophecy nor dreamed a nobler spiritual dream.

II. HERESIES

The late apostolic church was in constant danger of attack from two foes: from without it was harassed by Roman persecution; inwardly it was exposed to insidious pagan heresies. By the one of these the faith of the church was put to the supreme test; by the other it was driven to make its apology, to formulate its doctrine, and thus was led historically to insure its own preservation for the ages to come. The writings of this period, taken together, represent a noble literature of loyalty. Sometimes this loyalty is expressed in sublime words setting forth the Christian's creed; at other times it reveals itself in deeds of endurance which glorify Christian character. The call

[1] The five represented as having already fallen are: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. The one now in power is, in all probability, Vespasian; and the one yet to come, Titus. The eighth who receives especial mention, accordingly, is Domitian.

of the time was for men who could both defend the faith and die for it.

Generally speaking, the defenders of the Christian faith, in late New Testament times, were of two types: (1) those who sought to preserve the doctrinal purity of the church; and (2) those who undertook to commend Christianity to the outside Gentile world. Within the first group the Hebrew spirit predominated; within the second there were marked evidences of the influence of Greek, more particularly of Alexandrian, philosophy.[1] The whole doctrinal trend manifested at this time is further traceable to two causes. The first was the increasing remoteness of the period of Jesus' earthly life and ministry. The days of the primitive apostolic band were past, and the deeds and words of Jesus, once so vividly present and well preserved in the minds of eye-witnesses, were gradually becoming only a memory and a tradition. The early gospel religion of Jesus had by now been transformed into a religion *about* Jesus. Christian thought had slowly advanced by a transfer of emphasis from Jesus' teachings and acts to his person. This natural tendency opened the way for the second factor, the Greek influence, which contributed so potently to the rise of doctrinal Christianity. The effect of Hellenism upon biblical history reaches back as far as the fourth century B. C. Even the rise of Pharisaism was not able to check its irresistible advance. Paul found it the natural bridge for the progress of the gospel from Jewish to Gentile Christianity. In his address to the Athenians, and in several of his letters, notably Colossians, he made apt use of its speculative possibilities and of its broadly humanitarian outlook. In the epistle to the Hebrews, notwithstanding the racial implication of its title, the Greek influence again appeared. It was equally conspicuous and potent in the later so-called Johannine writings.[2] Alexandrianism, as represented in Philo, particularly impressed the author of the Fourth Gospel. The doctrine of the divine Logos, which was by

[1] The epistles of James and I Peter are fair examples of the first tendency; Hebrews and the Johannine writings of the second.

[2] I. e., the Fourth Gospel, I, II and III John.

the Stoics conceived to be the great soul-principle pervading all life and responsible for the cosmic order, was regarded by Philo not as identical with God Himself—a pantheistic conception which his Jewish mind could not accept—but as a kind of intermediary agent through which God is operative in the world and by means of which He imparts Himself to the mystical nature of man.[1] This conception, after having undergone certain important modifications, is adopted by the writer of the Gospel of John. The Logos becomes a human-divine person and is identified with Christ.

The question of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel is as yet unanswered. We shall here content ourselves with the statement that the writer of the Gospel cannot have been the author of the book of the Revelation. Though they share exalted conceptions of Jesus, the two writings are theological opposites. The Gospel made its appeal to the steadily advancing Christian thought of the time; the book of the Revelation rested its case firmly upon a Christian interpretation of current apocalyptic hope. The Apocalypse dated the coming of Christ in the future; the Gospel regarded it as already consummated. The Christ of John is indwelling; the Jesus of the Revelation is transcendent.[2]

The Fourth Gospel was not intended to displace but to supplement the previous Gospel narratives. The three Synoptic Gospels were written at intervals between 65 and 80 A. D. The circumstances which constituted their background are quite definitely clear. Mark's Gospel was occasioned by the death of Peter, whose account of the life and acts of Jesus it was designed to preserve. Matthew's longer narrative, based on existing sources, was the almost direct outcome of its author's solemn reflection upon the destruction of Jerusalem, which was inter-

[1] It is evident from Colossians that Paul's mind was moving in this direction. The author of Hebrews goes even farther by regarding the faith of the Christian as a kind of esoteric knowledge leading to communion with the unseen world. Alexandrianism and the apocalyptic idea of the Messiahship of Jesus are fully blended in the epistle.

[2] The author of the Fourth Gospel was also the writer of the three epistles, I, II, and III John. I John should be read as an introduction to the Gospel to which it is the natural key.

Chap. VI:1.

preted by him as a divine judgment upon the Hebrew nation for its rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus. The evangelist Luke desired primarily, by means of his Gospel, to give the life of Jesus a realistic historical setting, and to commend it to the changing circumstances of the Roman world. The Fourth Evangelist, representing a later age, confronted a more difficult and complex task. Accepting all existing biographies of Jesus as the foundation of historical Christianity, he undertook to give the Christian Gospel its supreme place among the current religious movements of the time, to defend it against subtle heresies, and to interpret it in terms of the noblest spiritual ideals and concepts of his day.

The language of the Fourth Gospel was familiar to its readers. Gnosticism, with its strange intermingling of Greek philosophy, Hebrew prophecy, and Oriental mysticism, had given currency to the Logos idea and, therefore, to such characteristic Johannine terms as truth, light, life, love, flesh, and spirit. The danger lay in the too free use of them in the Gnostic rather than the Christian sense. The great menace, in fact, of Gnosticism was its refusal to remain outside of Christianity. It fastened itself as a parasite upon the Christian faith, drawing sustenance from it and at the same time robbing it of its individual character and vitality. The true "gnosis," or knowledge, according to the Gospel writer, is in Christ who is the light and life of all men. The concept, light, is everywhere symbolical of revelation; the term life denotes regeneration. Wherever this divine life is imparted, it effects a mysterious change known as the rebirth. This rebirth is the beginning and the perpetual guaranty of man's spiritual sonship. By means of it man passes out of death into life; he becomes immortal. Thereafter, with Christ, he becomes the creature of eternity; faith is transformed into fellowship, and hope into actual realization.[1]

The First Epistle of John, dwelling similarly on the light and

[1] This teaching closely resembles that of Paul. There is, however, a difference. Paul attributes regeneration to faith in the risen Christ; John ascribes it to the operation of the divine Logos. Paul, moreover, lays emphasis upon the side of human experience in the process of spiritual regeneration; John stresses the divine side.

life which are manifested in Christ, gives particular recognition to the additional divine characteristic of love. With true insight into the life and message of Jesus, the author of the epistle regards Christian love as the sublimest virtue, the consummation of all things, the very essence and nature of God. Love, such as was revealed in Christ, is the golden key with which the human spirit is able to unlock the hidden mysteries of the world and of God.

At the close of the first century the speculative and mystical tendencies of Christian thought had become established. The church had by this time become a recognized institution. Its doctrines had undergone systematization. Its missionaries had become known in the farther regions of the empire. The gospel had begun to make a strong appeal to the upper social classes as well as to the common people. Christianity, in short, was beginning to make history. Those who arose to defend or promulgate its faith proclaimed a cosmopolitan message. It produced philosophers and theologians, it influenced social customs, it created a distinct culture and an invaluable literature; it trained noble citizens, elevated moral standards, prepared men for high office, established sanctuaries, disseminated useful knowledge, comforted the sorrowing and the enslaved; best of all, it brought a renaissance of faith and hope to a weary and spiritually hungry world.

It is evident, however, from the appearance of a certain group of New Testament writings, that the religious teachings set forth in the Johannine literature did not pass into acceptance unchallenged. Strong opposition seems, indeed, to have been registered against them on two counts: (1) against their substitution of a certain type of metaphysics which had come to be associated with the person of Jesus, for the more natural emphasis upon the biographical and ethical elements in the original Gospels; (2) against their insistence upon an immediate realization of the benefits of the Christian faith, as contrasted with the future emphasis characteristic of the current apocalyptic hope. On the first of these two grounds the reaction which

followed was not without cause. The Christ of the Fourth Gospel differed sufficiently from the person of Jesus in the Synoptic narratives to account for the protest. Present-day scholarship, by taking its stand with the first biographers of Jesus, has given this position an added importance. The movement away from religious experience, however, and toward popular Jewish Messianism, was not in the direction of progress. The conservatism for which this popular movement stood is clearly reflected in the epistles called Second Peter, James, and Jude.

The epistle of James is a noble ethical treatise. It is an earnest plea in the interest of practical daily religion. To identify it with the Judaizing influences which, in an earlier time, were directed against the teachings of Paul, is to misapprehend its message. There is in it no trace of an insistence upon religious ceremonialism or race prerogative. The spirit of the author is genuinely Christian. He issues a call for a return to the first principles of discipleship. He regards doctrine as secondary to duty, and the religious man's creed as of lesser importance than his conduct. He does not underestimate the importance of faith, but insists that its value be determined by its effect upon individual moral character.[1] Mysticism and rationalism are, after all, but attitudes. A Christian, says James, is known by his acts.

The circumstances which determined the origin and aim of the epistles of Jude and Second Peter have already been outlined. These writings reveal at their basis a strong popular mistrust of a Christianity founded solely upon spiritual experience or philosophical thought. They voice a desire for a return to historical tradition, to popular and primitive religious conceptions, to the apocalyptic hope which had its origin in Jewish Messianism.[2] Jude's epistle was occasioned by the rise of a special emergency. It was a message of solemn warning against the corrupting influences of certain misguided Christians who lived as though the Lord's return were still far away. Perhaps mis-

[1] James' teaching does not contradict that of Paul, but supplements it. Paul seeks a dynamic for character; James puts character to the test.

[2] In James the ethical impulse is traceable to the O. T. law; in Judge and Second Peter the outlook into the future is that of Jewish apocalyptic prophecy.

construing the Fourth Evangelist's teaching concerning the ever-present Comforter,[1] they denied the second advent of Jesus altogether. Accordingly they gave themselves up to gross immoralities, professing, even while they did so, the prerogative of their Christian liberty. They were a sect deserving of the terrible judgment which the author of the epistle foresaw as their doom. There is a clear prophetic note in this brief tract. Perhaps its most distinct teaching is the truth that there is no heresy so dangerous as that of an evil or immoral life.

Second Peter contains much of Jude in expanded form. It is addressed, in the form of a reply, to those who either despaired of or denied the earthly return of Jesus. The epistle is gospel and prophecy combined. It forecasts the coming of Jesus, but associates with his advent the cataclysmic events referred to in the current literature of Jewish apocalypse. Chronologically it stands at the end of the list of the New Testament writings.[2] So also when judged for its religious and moral value, it gives evidence that the golden age of apostolic history is ended. The great era of inspiration is past. The curtain falls. When it rises again, the light of history falls upon the period of the Apostolic Fathers, who are presently found at the new task of canonizing the sacred scriptures, refuting current heresies, writing the lives of Christian martyrs, and offering to the world at large, and to all future time, their memorable Christian Apologies.

III. LIFE IN THE LATE APOSTOLIC AGE

The apostolic church was a genuine brotherhood. It was the wish of Jesus that all who believed in him should be united into a community of saints. Paul's vision of a universal church gave breadth of application to this great gospel ideal.[3] To be a Christian, accordingly, meant to be identified in personal fellowship with an empire-wide religious movement. A member-

[1] John XVI. Jesus, according to this chapter, promised the immediate coming of the Comforter to take the place of his own bodily presence.

[2] The epistle may with fair accuracy be dated about 125 A. D.

[3] Jesus stressed primarily the individual and creative aspects of religion; Paul sought its adaptation to life in the Roman world.

ship, thus recognized, fostered intercommunication between the East and the West. It inculcated and nurtured the ideal of Christian hospitality. Missionaries and prophets who went from place to place contributed to the diffusion of Christian customs and culture. The support received by them from those to whom they ministered, strengthened this bond of brotherhood. The letters and epistles which, in addition to copies of the written Gospels, passed from church to church, confirmed and comforted the churches thus held together by a common faith. Finally, the confederated churches of the empire were fused into one great communion or brotherhood by the fires of persecution. The mingled prayers and blood of the Christian martyrs inseparably united those who survived. Thus, also, as the spiritual body of Christ, they became one with him through the sacred fellowship of suffering.

As time elapsed, heresies crept into the church and this unity was endangered. Doctrinal differences tended toward separation. Tests began to be applied to those seeking admittance into the organization of Christian fellowship. As a consequence a more perfect concord was established within the church, but at the expense of its larger ideal of universality. The result was an all too early trend toward religious separatism. The Christian society tended thereby to become exclusive. Organization and ritual were called into use to limit its privileges to the especially initiated. By the beginning of the second century the spirit of institutionalism was already at work, undertaking to transform Christianity from a developing world brotherhood into an ecclesiastical sect. The fact that the change was not immediately successful was attributable to the church's deep and undying devotion to its Founder. The presence of Jesus overshadowed his faithful disciples, keeping alive in them that which was vital to their faith, and preparing them for the day when the further growth of Christianity would help it to survive the necessity of the more complex organization which the exigencies of the changing Roman empire would make inevitable.

The beginning of Christian worship dated back to Pentecost. The ascension of Jesus had transformed the men and women

who had been his earthly followers into a company of adoring disciples and apostles. Their need of spiritual fellowship had drawn them together as often as opportunity afforded. The time of gathering had usually been at night, after the day's toil; and the place, one of quiet retirement, away from the eye of the curious-minded or the reach of the persecutor's hand. The religious services had been exceedingly simple. At first the meetings had been held daily and had been concluded with the sacred meal of communion.[1] Later, however, secular duties limited them to fewer times in the week. Among Jewish Christians the Sabbath was invested with a new and particularly sacred significance. In Gentile communities the first day of the week, in commemoration of Jesus' resurrection, became peculiarly known as the "Lord's Day." Good Friday, Easter, and Christmas were in the process of formation as annual religious festivals. The first two of these festive seasons began to be authoritatively celebrated as early as the second century: the last appeared as a definitely sanctioned holy day of the church calendar a century later.

Apostolic Christianity was from the beginning a home religion. It extolled the beauty of family life. Home altars were its first shrines of worship. The language of religion thus became familiar to every Christian household. The Lord's Supper with its sacred solemnity, the Agapé or Love Feast, the rite of baptism, Christian song, prayer, the reading of the scriptures, public and private teaching, prophecy, and the free opportunity offered to inspired persons for spontaneous utterance or "speaking with tongues," together gave beauty and variety to the religious services. In their simple attractiveness, as well as their moral purity, these forms of worship more than rivaled the best of the Roman festivals. Many, even among the nobility in the empire, were won over by them and became Christian converts.[2] Christian worship throughout the Apostolic Age was a communion of saints, a fellowship of brotherly love, a source of comfort and of moral inspiration. But it was more: the conscious presence of

[1] See Acts II:46.

[2] Domitilla, e. g., the wife of the emperor Domitian, was a Christian.

Jesus made it a sacrament; it became an exercise in the art of holy living, in the cultivation of Christlike graces and virtues; it prepared men for the duties of citizenship and taught them how to live together in peace and good-will amid the hostile surroundings of a pagan and strife-ridden world.

The church began its career as a simply organized body of Christian believers. The task of the first disciples was wholly evangelistic. A little later outstanding representatives of the original Twelve became recognized leaders. The authority of the apostles was at first purely spiritual. Gradually, however, official ranks were established which divided the church leadership into three groups: (1) Apostles, whose occupation was chiefly that of traveling Christian evangelists; (2) prophets, whose especially revealed gifts entitled them to recognition as the spokesmen of the spirit and will of Christ; (3) teachers, to whom the Christian community intrusted the task of religious instruction. A little later a fourth type of leadership appeared in the person of an official administrator. He was at first simply a deacon or pastor; then, in the course of time, he became an elder or presbyter; finally, through his increase of usefulness, he assumed the authority of a general overseer or bishop. This person of subsequent high office probably began his ministry in the apostolic community as a distributor of alms, and as the presiding steward at the Eucharistic service. His duties, however, soon became manifold. One of these was to be responsible for ecclesiastical discipline. The power thus invested in him began gradually to overshadow that of the teacher, the prophet, and even the apostle. In the next stage of the historical process the bishop became the acknowledge successor of them all. He was chosen from among the elders as the one best qualified for outstanding leadership. As the number of persons appointed to this high office steadily increased, those who excelled, by reason either of local advantages or of the superiority of their individual gifts, were granted the right of priority over their more moderately gifted and less influential brethren. As a consequence the religious authority of the church came gradually to be invested in a few conspicuous leaders. Its government, once purely

democratic, slowly became hierarchical. The pattern of the inevitable transformation was the political Roman government. The bishops became rulers exercising all but absolute power. Only one step more remained to be taken to complete the parallel between the church and the state. It followed with the elevation of the bishop of Rome to a place of priority within the circle of the church's appointed official leaders.

The supreme gift of the Apostolic Age to subsequent history was not an ecclesiastical system, or a body of religious doctrine, but a dynamic and living faith, strong and resourceful enough to redeem and to remake the world. The age was throughout one of beginnings. It was an age of Christian pioneers, of spiritual adventure, of testing for the gospel in the laboratory of the Roman world. Its influence upon subsequent history may, first of all, be measured by its gifted and heroic men. Names like those of Paul, Peter, James, John, Philip, Barnabas and Mark, Timothy and Titus, Luke and Stephen, Silas and Apollos, are illustrious in the annals of all time. Again, no greater tribute can be paid to the age than to say that it produced the New Testament. Apostolic Christianity could, of course, not have been possible without the even greater age which preceded it. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that no book of the New Testament is known to have been written earlier than fifteen years after the death of Jesus. The men and women, who, in the latter half of the first century, set out to win the world for Christ, were notable not only for their heroic deeds; they were the creators of the greatest known treasure of the world's religious literature. Finally, it is to the Apostolic age that we are indebted for the actual origin of Christian doctrine. The formulation of the Apostolic creed did not, in reality, take place until about the middle of the second century.[1] Its elements, however, are firmly embedded in the teachings of the late New Testament period. We inherit from the writers of this time all that is doctrinally vital and essential to a confession of the Chris-

[1] The story of the origin and early development of the Apostles' Creed is interestingly told by Professor G. P. Fisher in his "History of Christian Doctrine," p. 70 f.

tian faith. It is to them that we should go in an attempt to reconstruct our own present-day theology. These men of New Testament times did not always agree. They sometimes viewed the sublime truths of the gospel one-sidedly; being human, they "knew in part and they prophesied in part." [1] The influences of past history, of race, and of their own age were upon them. But they lived intensely and consecratedly, and in the full acceptance of Christian revelation. Their faith was no mere shibboleth. It was for them the very essence of life, prepared and purified in the crucible of affliction and tested in the fires of a transforming individual experience. Through contact with it, divergent doctrinal conceptions were fused and poured into one common mold. Out of the process of this fusion came the great Christian creed. Throughout the ensuing centuries millions professed it. It became the adopted symbol of the religion of a continent. It is ours today to be reinterpreted in the light of the New Testament and to be given its true original significance as we live over again in our own lives the strong faith, the radiant hope, and the sacrificial love which gave it birth.

[1] I Cor. XIII:9.

AN APPENDIX

THE LIFE OF JESUS ACCORDING TO THE FOURTH GOSPEL

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THE LIFE OF JESUS ACCORDING TO THE FOURTH GOSPEL

In addition to its general theological point of view, the narrative of the Gospel of John contains, in its contrast to the Synoptic Gospels, the following dominant characteristics: (1) a carefully outlined ministry of Jesus covering a period of approximately three and one half years,[1] as compared with one and one half years found to be sufficient according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke; (2) a ministry centering in Judea rather than Galilee; (3) Jesus' teachings presented in the form of discourses or controversial dialogues, as contrasted with the Synoptic use of the parable; (4) miracles interpreted as signs of the divine character and authority of Jesus, rather than acts of mercy and divine compassion; (5) an early antagonism to Jesus, which, in the Fourth Gospel, is shared by the general Jewish populace, in contrast to the Synoptic record of a period of early popularity, a slowly growing hostility, and a final controversial encounter with the Jewish leaders; (6) an immediate and public declaration of Jesus' Messianic mission, as compared with the course of its gradual historical unfolding to the developing thought of the disciples, as followed by the earlier Gospel writers.

According to the Fourth Gospel the three and one half years of the public ministry of Jesus fall into six periods. The annual Passovers—of which there are three—mark the crises about which Jesus' whole life centered. Each of these crises was significant for its added revelation of the person and mission of Jesus as the Christ. To use approximately the author's own words, each was a sign that Jesus had come to his own, and that they who were his own received him not; but that, upon those

[1] Sept., 26 A.D. to April, 29 A.D.

who did receive him and believe in him, he bestowed freely the gift of divine sonship and of eternal life.

The first period lasted about six months. The approximate date for it was from September, 26 A. D. to April, 27 A. D. The Gospel narrative of the period is found in John I:29–II:12. The principal incidents are the testimony of John the Baptist, the call of the first four disciples,[1] the marriage at Cana, and a brief visit to Capernaum.

The scenes in the second period center wholly in Judea. The time extends to the close of 27 A. D. The events, recorded in John II: 13–III 36, are the following: the cleansing of the temple, followed by Jesus' first open declaration of himself, and the consequent conversion or rising opposition of those who heard him; the visit of Nicodemus and Jesus' discourse on God's love for the world; and the Baptist's final testimony to the Messianic call of Jesus.

The third period was predominantly Galilean. The incidents in it occurred during the four months between the close of 27 A. D., and the second Passover of Jesus' ministry in April 28 A. D. The incidents of the period are recorded in John IV–VI. It opens with Jesus' journey from Judea northward through Samaria, and his discourse with the woman at the well of Sychar. Upon his arrival in Galilee Jesus entered Capernaum. There began his ministry of teaching and healing of which the Synoptic Gospels give a more complete account. The Galilean ministry was interrupted early in the spring by a visit to Jerusalem.[2] The occasion was, it appears, the annual feast of Purim, celebrated in the capital city one month before the Passover. Jesus found it the opportune time to declare himself to be the Son of God. The incident at Bethesda opened the way for this declaration, which assumed a two-fold aspect: it revealed Jesus in his relation (1) to the sacred ancestral law, and (2) to God whom he called his Father. After Jesus' return to Galilee [3] he crossed over to the farther side of the lake. There, reminded by

[1] Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel.
[2] Chap. V:1.
[3] Chap. VI:1.

the impending Passover of the great spiritual need of the multitudes that had followed him to the place, he wrought the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. Upon his return to Capernaum, where the leaders of the expectant multitude sought to make him king, he discoursed to them of the loaves and the fishes, of Moses and the desert manna, and, last of all, of the true bread of life which had come out of heaven. As the son of God he himself was that bread. To partake of him signified the assurance of an abundant and eternal life. The strangely mystical words of this discourse precipitated a crisis among his followers. Many found them a hard saying, and thereafter walked no more with him. This event, according to John, was the turning point in Jesus' ministry. Judea by this time had rejected him openly. Galilean enthusiasts of Messianism turned from him in disappointment. While, in the midst of this generally increasing apostasy, one of the twelve had made a confession of loyalty, another was brooding and plotting revenge. Last and most trying of all, Jesus' own brothers did not believe in him. Gradually a deep and depressing gloom settled around him. He found himself more and more alone with the little group of disciples.

The fourth period—usually called the later period of Jesus' Galilean ministry—of which the Synoptists offer an elaborated account, is, by the author of the Fourth Gospel, dismissed in one single sentence.[1] It is the period of gradually growing hostility in Galilee, of frequent retirements and wanderings in regions bordering on Galilean territory,—culminating in the transfiguration, of which, as of the temptation in the wilderness and the struggle in Gethsemane, the Fourth Gospel makes no mention.

As the author of the Fourth Gospel records it, the fifth period begins with the Feast of Tabernacles in the autumn of 28 A. D., nad continues until the spring of 29 A. D. The six months thus indicated were spent by Jesus in and about Jerusalem, and in Perea east of the Jordan. The account of the period is found in John VII–XI. The principal events, taken in their order, are these: (1) Jesus' visit to Jerusalem where, on the last

[1] Chapter VII:1.

day of the feast, he faces the multitude in the temple and cries out to it from the deep hunger of his compassionate heart: "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink"; (2) the report of the officers, sent by the Jewish authorities to arrest Jesus, summed up in the words: "Never man so spake";[1] (3) the story of the woman taken in adultery, omitted in most of the manuscripts of ancient authority; (4) a discourse of Jesus upon the subject of the truth which sets men free; (5) the incident in which Jesus' healing of the blind man offers the providential occasion, and serves as a parable, for his great discourse on the light of the world; (6) the account of the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, at which time Jesus invited the people to himself and discoursed to them in the language of the parable of the good shepherd; (7) the announcement that Jesus, about to be stoned by the Jews, retired to the district beyond the Jordan[2] where, a little later, occurred the miracle of the raising of Lazarus, and where he remained[3] until six days before the Passover, or the beginning of the last week of his earthly life.

The sixth period in the life of Jesus comprises the events of the Passion week, and culminates in the stories of the crucifixion and resurrection. The chapters XII–XX, which record these events, represent nearly one half of the entire content of the Gospel. They fall naturally into two distinct parts: (1) the public and private discourses of Jesus preparatory to his passion;[4] and (2) Jesus' trial, his death and resurrection.[5] In these closing scenes the evangelist affords the reader a penetrating glimpse into the inner nature and thought life of Jesus, and into the consequences of his many-sided contacts with men. There were Mary, Martha, and Lazarus who loved him; the chief priests who had determined upon his death; the crowds who welcomed him with loud hosannas; the Pharisees who confessed in their helplessness that the whole world had gone after him; the Greeks who had come from afar and sought to see him;

[1] VII:46.
[2] John, Chapter X:40.
[3] Ephraim, Chapter XI:54.
[4] Chapter XII–XVII.
[5] XVIII–XX.

those rulers of the Jews who were his sincere but secret followers; Peter who first remonstrated, and then capitulated when Jesus, girded as a servant, undertook to wash his feet; Judas Iscariot who, though plotting treason, consented to his master's gentle ministration; the intimate disciple group sadly and lovingly attentive to the quiet farewell words that fell from Jesus' lips; last of all, Jesus himself, ineffable in the beauty of his charracter and his prayerful resignation to the Father's will, kingly in the presence of his accusers, majestic in his silence, and victorious in his death. The story of the resurrection with its emphasis upon the living and life-giving Christ, and the record of the final appearance of Jesus to the transformed disciple group—including the appended Chapter XXI—constitute a suitable ending to this characteristic and noble gospel. As an ever-recurring echo from the voice of its living pages comes the familiar yet challenging call of Jesus: "Lovest thou me? Feed my sheep."

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

BIBLICAL HISTORY	B. C.	FOREIGN HISTORY	B. C.
BUILDING OF THE NATION			
		Rise of Babylonian city states: especially of Ur in the south, and Babylon in the north	4500–3800
		Supremacy of Ur	3800–3300
		Conquest of the Sumerians c.	3300
		Egypt under the rule of Memphis	3400–2900
		Period of the Great Pyramids c.	2800
Amorite invasion of Palestine c.	2200	Amorite invasion of Mesopotamia c.	2200
		Elamite invasion of Mesopotamia c.	2000
		Eastern supremacy of Babylon	2100–1700
		Hammurabi c.	1900
Canaanite invasion of Palestine c.	1650	Rise of Assyria c.	1700
Hebrews enter Palestine c.	1500	Egypt under the Hyksos kings c.	1600
Egyptian conquest of Palestine c.	1450		
Joseph c.	1375	Hittite migration c.	1450
		Amenhotep IV	1375–1358
		Tell-el-Amarna letters	1375
		Rameses II	1300–1225
Hebrew exodus c.	1200	Merneptah	1225–1200
Joshua c.	1150		
Period of the Judges	1150–1050	Tiglath Pileser I c.	1100
Samuel c.	1050		
Saul	1050–1010		
David	1010–970		
Solomon	970–937		
AGE OF PROPHECY			
Division of the Hebrew empire	937		
Jeroboam I	937–915		
Rehoboam	937–920		
Asa	917–876	Ben-hadad I	900
Jehoshaphat	876–851	Ben-hadad II	850

Omri 887–875
Ahab 875–853
Elijah c. 850
Jehovistic narrative (J) c. 850
Elisha c. 840
Jehu 842–814
Jeroboam II 781–740
Amos 750
Elohistic narrative (E) c. 750
Uzziah 789–740
Isaiah 740–701
Hosea 735
Ahaz 735–715
Fall of Samaria 732
Micah 722
Hezekiah 715–686
Manasseh 686–641
Deuteronomic law (D) c. 650
Scythian invasion of Palestine 626
Zephaniah 626
Jeremiah 626–586
Josiah's reform 621–608
Nahum c. 615
Combination of J and E c. 600
Ezekiel 592-570
Fall of Jerusalem 586

Shalmaneser II 850

Hazael 825

Rezon II 750
Tiglath Pileser IV 745–727
Fall of Damascus 732
Shalmaneser IV 727-722
Sargon 722-705
Fall of Ashdod (Egypt) 711
Sennacherib 705–681
Assyria's campaign against Palestine 701

Esarhaddon 681–668
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Nabopolassar 626–605
Fall of Nineveh 612
Pharaoh Necho c. 610

Battle of Carchemish 605
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Evil Merodach 562–560
Neriglissar 560–555
Jewish temple at Elephantine c. 550

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Lamentations c. 575
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Second Isaiah (XL–LV) c. 550
Holiness code (Lev. XVII–XXVI) c. 550
Combination of J, E and D c. 550
Haggai c. 520
Zechariah c. 518
Dedication of second temple 516
Malachi 450
Priestly narrative (P) c. 450
Nehemiah 444
Job c. 400
Ezra's priestly reform c. 400
Ruth c. 400
Joel c. 375
Jonah c. 350
Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah c. 300

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Pompey enters Syria 65
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Herod the Great 37–4

A. D.	LIFE OF CHRIST	A. D.
	Augustus 31 B. C.–14 A. D.	
	Philo of Alexandria 20 B. C.–50 A. D.	
Birth of Jesus 4 (or 6) B. C.	Archelaus 4 B. C.–6 A. D.	
Baptism of Jesus 27 (or 29) A. D.	Herod Antipas 4 B. C.–39 A. D.	
The Crucifixion 29 (or 31)	Herod Philip 4 B. C.–37 A. D.	
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